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'We Welcome Offers of Cine Film for Inclusion in Future Bus Archive Features'

711. Cobham, UK Bus Rally April 1999. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer with virtually all entrants arriving at the rally site at Brooklands, Surrey. Heavy London influence on entrants both preserved and new.
708. Cambridge, UK Buses March 1999. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer, fine spring weather in Cambridge with attractive locations. Fleet number announced, also visiting Huntingdon.
707. Scotland/Borders, UK Buses March 1999. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer, visits Peebles, Galashiels, Hawick and Berwick plus Ainswick on return trip. Fleet numbers announced to assist identification of buses.
705. Oxford, UK Buses March 1999. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer with fleet numbers announced. Visits Oxford and short feature on Banbury. Traffic chaos in Oxford city centre with road closures.
704. Warwickshire, UK Buses March 1999. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer. Fleet numbers announced. Visiting Stratford upon Avon (for Guide Friday local services), Royal Leamington Spa and Rugby.
700. Provincial, UK Buses February 1999. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer visiting Fareham, Gosport and Portsmouth with fleet numbers announced to assist with vehicle ID. Prior to incorporation with Citybus.
699. Yorkshire, UK Buses February 1999. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer with fleet numbers announced visiting Leeds and Halifax. Archive video by Richard Lomas as filler from 2/91 in Morely, Bradford, Leeds and Sheffield.
698. Yorkshire, UK Buses February 1999. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer with fleet numbers announced visiting Huddersfield and Wakefield for introduction of Arriva livery and new Alexander DAF single deckers.
697. Scotland, UK Buses. An hour long compilation with 1997 scenes in Paisley, Airdrie and Dunfermline (inc. Latholmond free service). The archive section 1970s-80s incl. Lothian, Aberdeen.
694. Northern Ireland, Buses February 1999. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer starts with Lisburn and Newry, March 1998 then January 1999 at Belfast Short Strand then Antrim, Ballymena, Coleraine, Limavady and Londonderry.
689. Bristol, UK Buses 1998/99. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer with most fleet numbers announced to aid identification, in winter sunshine between December 1998 and January 1999.
686. Bombay, India Buses December 1998. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer with well kept buses of BEST which includes over 800 double deck Ashok Leylands rear platforms, almost utility PD3 style!
681. Remember 'The Trolleybus', UK Trolleybuses. An introduction to British Trolleybuses with material drawn from throughout the PMP archive. Lasts 58 minutes with full narration mainly 1960s scenes, most in colour.

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43608	Northern Counties Palatine II - First Badgerline	Mar. £13.50	EYMS GROUP LIMITED			
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43905	Daimler CW Utility Bus - London Greenline, 1999 Tooling	Mar. £13.50	42911	Optare Delta - Barfons	May £13.50	
43906	Guy Arab Utility Bus - Southdown Motor Services, 1999 Tooling	Feb. £13.50	43408	Plaxton Beaver 2 - Trent Buses	June £12.50	
JULY - SEPTEMBER 1999 RELEASES						
42808	Bedford OB Coach - Guinness	Mar. £12.50	RAIL LINK			
LEISURE AND PLEASURE			43806	Plaxton Escalibur - Virgin Rail	Aug. £14.50	
42722	Van Hool Alizee - The Kings Ferry	Jan. £13.50	43314	Plaxton Premiere - Southend Arterial Express	Aug. £14.50	
43116	Leyland Lynx Mk1 - Maidstone & District, (Park & Ride)	Jan. £13.50	43410	Plaxton Beaver 2 - Midland Mainline	(Aug) £12.50	
42910	Optare Delta - Blackpool & Fylde Blue Buses	Jan. £13.50	42912	Optare Delta - South West Trains	(Aug) £13.50	
42723	Van Hool Alizee - Seagull Coaches	Feb. £13.50	43315	Plaxton Premiere - GNER	(Sept) £14.50	
43309	Plaxton Premiere - Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company	Mar. £14.50	CLASSICS			
43803	Plaxton Escalibur - Oxford Citylink X90	Mar. £14.40	43904	AEC Utility Bus - Leicester City Transport	(July) £13.50	
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43010	Leyland Olympian/ECW - PMT	Jan. £13.50	40502	Bristol L/ECW - Tilling Red Cream	(July) £12.50	
43115	Leyland Lynx Mk1 - PMT Interurban X64	Feb. £13.50	43708	O1 Trolleybus - London Transport	(Aug) £14.50	
BLACKPOOL			43902	Bristol K Utility - Southern Vectis	(Aug) £13.50	
3513	Blackpool Balloon Tram - 1980's livery	May £16.99	43901	Guy Arab Utility - Oxford Motor Services	(Sept) £13.50	
44001	Blackpool Brush Railcoach - Original livery	Apr £15.99	44902	Victoria Coach Station - Card Kit	(July) £13.50	
43512	Blackpool Balloon Tram - No 72 Pontons	Apr £16.99	LEISURE AND PLEASURE			
44002	Blackpool Brush Railcoach - Current Livery	June £15.99	43312	Plaxton Premiere - Silverdale Coaches	(July) £14.50	
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40106	Weymann Trolleybus - Maidstone & District	April £13.99	BUSWAYS			
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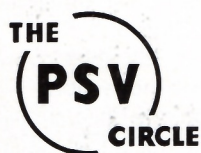
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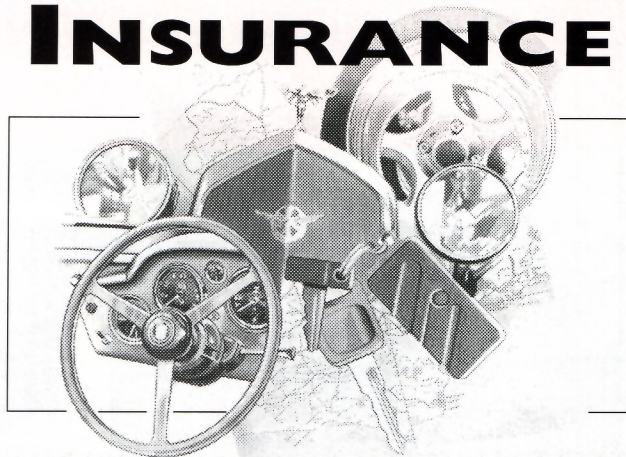
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THE MARKET LEADER



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Plaxton Premiere, Plymouth City Bus	£14.50
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Bristol L/ECW, Tilling Red/Cream	£12.50
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Guy Arab Utility, Oxford Motor Services	£13.50

Leisure & Pleasure

Plaxton Premiere, Silverdale Coaches	£14.50
Van Hool Alizee, Western National	£13.50
Blackpool Balloon Tram, Paseje Del Terri	£16.50
Neoplan Cityliner, Hallmark	£14.50

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June

Guy Arab 1, Coventry Transport	£12.50
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July

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As low-floor double-deckers take off, the Volvo Olympian is becoming increasing an Irish model — and not just for Dublin Bus!



Above:
New to Grayline Tours of Dublin is this East Lancs Pyoneer-bodied Olympian, 99 D 28988.
CHRISTINA CURTIS

Below:
Two of the last Northern Counties-bodied Olympians have gone to Kavanagh of Urlingford. These are to full London specification, and the rest of the same batch is now in service with First CentreWest in London. 99 WD 11 is seen on a contract in Dublin.
CHRISTINA CURTIS



BUS/RAIL INTEGRATION

It need hardly be said that we are into an era of searching for the elusive holy grail of 'integrated transport', and it probably hardly need to be said either that there is still a long way to go.

As reported in 'News' this month Virgin Trains has made good use of its tie-up with Stagecoach to introduce a system of dedicated feeder services linking places not on Virgin's rail services to stations that are. Interestingly most of the places they go to are on other people's railway services, and one might wonder whether the idea is more to pinch passengers from other train operating companies rather than to provide genuine integration. In fairness though they do open up some useful opportunities for travel; connecting Buxton to Macclesfield for instance gives a shorter journey for southbound passengers from Buxton than having to go either to Stockport or Manchester. Whether the Coventry-Stratford link will prove more successful than one once supplied by Guide Friday remains to be seen.

Certainly there must be great scope for bus/rail integration, and while one recognises the necessity for such rail links to get from A to B quickly and directly, it would be good to see such services also benefiting more local passengers. Maybe commercial pressures will prevail, as the history of bus/rail links has never been one of wild successes.

Maybe they're not publicised properly — or is it just that people still prefer to use cars or taxis to get to and from the train? Certainly the former was the case when we travelled recently to Oxford, where you can get a £1 add-on to use the local buses — yet the computerised ticket machines at Slough knew nothing of it and there was nothing on the station to suggest to passengers that this facility was available.

The seamless multi-modal public transport journey is in most cases still a long way off and a lot of hard work and lateral thinking still needs to be applied to the problem. It would be dog-in-the-manger to suggest that because rail links have not often been successful before that this new initiative is doomed before it starts. But hard selling will be needed before people who aren't readers of *Buses* or *Modern Railways* even realise they exist.

STEPHEN MORRIS

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*G. Irvine Millar and
 John A. Doherty*

Cover:
 Lothian has received the first of its Alexander
 ALX400-bodied Dennis Tridents; they give a new
 look to this rather staid undertaking.
 GAVIN BOOTH



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A pair of Ivecos in Southend
 RICHARD DELAHOY



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Ramco — Malta's newest bus
 JOHN G. LIDSTONE



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Bolton 100 at Manchester
 PHILIP LAMB



**49
 99**
BUSES
50 YEARS



CURRENT ISSUES

around the industry

STAGECOACH EXPANDS INTO ITALY . . .

Stagecoach Holdings has reached conditional agreement to buy a 35% stake in the Italian-based Sogin Group for £23.5m. It has an option to buy the remaining 10% holdings of the Vinella family; FS, the Italian state railway, holds the remaining 55%. The existing agreement with FS gives Vinella day-to-day operational control over the group, with FS consulted on all strategic decisions.

Sogin is Italy's largest privately-managed bus operator, with approximately 1,800 vehicles and 2,500 employees. Its 1998 turnover was £111.8m and its profit before tax £6.6m.

. . . WHILE NATIONAL EXPRESS EXPANDS INTO PERTH

After buying National Bus Company (*Buses* June) National Express has announced that it is moving into Perth. But this is not a head-to-head with Stagecoach, for this is Perth, Western Australia, just as NBC is an Australian company. National Express Group has bought Transport Management Group Pty for £2.1m. TMG operates under fixed-price contracts in the southern suburbs of Perth under the trading name Southern Coast Transit. TMG has 190 vehicles and carries over 10m passengers each year.

The acquisition means that National Express now provides urban bus services in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, and is known to be bidding for four of five train and tram operations being privatised in Melbourne.

ERF MINIBUS

As part of a £5.25m deal with Marshall to buy design rights to the Class 8 utility cab and the Bedford parts business, ERF has bought the Marshall Minibus chassis design. ERF's bus activities have previously been in overseas markets, and it is thought that the Minibus could have some appeal in countries like Malta.

BLAZEFIELD ORDERS DARTS

BlazeField Holdings has placed its biggest order to date, 57 Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer for its Sovereign and London Sovereign operations.

MAYFLOWER'S STAGECOACH DEAL

Stagecoach has ordered over 300 buses in a £40m deal with Dennis and Alexander, now together under the Mayflower Corporation. There are options for a further 150 buses valued at £12m. The buses, midi, single-deck and double-deck vehicles, will be delivered between

now and the end of March 2000. However less than half are on Dennis chassis; 170 are MAN 18.220s. Also ordered are 106 Dennis Tridents and 34 Darts. Volvo is notably absent from these orders.

ARTICS FOR PRESCOTT'S HOME TOWN

Three Volvo B10MT/Jonckheere 72-seat artics have been placed in service by Stagecoach Kingston upon Hull on the 909 express service to Meadowhall, Sheffield from Hull, home town of deputy prime minister, John Prescott. The hourly service also provides links with P&O Ferries in Hull, Humberside airport, GNER trains from Doncaster, and Sheffield's tram system. Stagecoach Kingston upon Hull managing director, Ken Clarke, said: 'It is particularly appropriate that we are bringing them into service in Hull, given John Prescott's enthusiasm for encouraging more people to take advantage of public transport.'

OXFORD STRATEGY

On 1 June the central area measures of the Oxford Bus Strategy were introduced, involving the pedestrianisation of Cornmarket Street and a bus priority route through the city centre. Cars and general traffic are excluded from High Street between 07.30 and 18.30 daily.

Philip Kirk, commercial director of the Oxford Bus Company, said: 'The introduction of OTS is the culmination of 25 years' far-sighted transport planning by both the city and county councils. We have been able to match these efforts by investing in new vehicles, higher service frequencies and bargain fares. By working together, we now have a 'virtuous circle' of improving bus patronage leading to better services in and around the city. This must be a model for others to follow.'

Oxford Bus Company launched the first of 20 Alexander-bodied Dennis Tridents for use on its two intensive cross city Park & Ride services on the same day. The new 71-seat low-floor dual-door double-deckers are the first to feature a spiral central staircase. They carry Park&Ride green, blue, red and white livery and feature a pale green interior with a blue moquette into which is woven the company's 'Dreaming Spires' logo, and will gradually enter service once driver type-training is completed.

Following delivery of 15 Wright-bodied Volvo B10BLEs currently on order, Oxford's remaining Leyland Olympians will be withdrawn, the newest of them passing to Wycombe Bus, leaving the new Tridents as the Oxford Bus Company's only double-deckers.

GOING AHEAD IN SWEDEN

Go-Ahead Group has won a second rail contract in Sweden as part of a consortium involving GAG (29%) with French operator VIA-GTI (51%) and BK Tag of Sweden (20%). A new company, Sydvesten AB, is being formed to operate the West Coast railway line between Gothenburg and Malmö from January 2000. Sydvesten will operate and maintain trains leased from SJ, Swedish Railways, and will take full responsibility for marketing and passenger revenue.

The Go-Ahead Group is the subject of *Buses Focus* 11, on sale on 1 July.

TROLLEYBUSES FOR HONG KONG?

Trolleybuses could be introduced in Hong Kong, writes ALAN YEARSLEY, thanks to a combination of environmental concerns and surplus generating capacity of electricity companies.

Kowloon and Hong Kong Island suffer from high levels of air pollution, and according to recent reports, this is largely due to the heavy concentration of buses on the major corridors. Diesel fuel used in Hong Kong is refined in Singapore, where it is not considered cost-effective to produce ultra-low sulphur diesel for Hong Kong alone. Electric traction is therefore seen as the only solution to improve air quality.

Hong Kong's two major electricity providers, China Light & Power and the Hong Kong Electric Company, are allowed to make a 13% rate of return on their output, but may raise this if they increase their infrastructure. In this way, greater profits could enable the electricity companies to fund the power supply and infrastructure.

A trolleybus venture would not only make use of surplus capacity, but there would be a strong overall financial incentive to the companies to contribute towards funding the overhead wiring network.

Citybus managing director, Lyndon Rees, is optimistic about the project. Initially Citybus looked at the Dennis Dominator-based experimental trolleybus tested at Doncaster by South Yorkshire PTE, but later studies showed that it would be possible to convert existing Dennis Dragon six-wheelers at reasonable cost. There is sufficient space in the chassis for the traction motor, transfer box to the existing back axle, and the electrical control equipment, says Rees. Overhead traction equipment for trolleybuses is available from several sources in Britain, Europe, China and the USA, and all options are being considered, he says.

Citybus would like to equip two routes initially, including the steeply-graded route 40 through narrow winding routes in Mid-Levels. These would demonstrate the system before extending it to the main network. Rees sees no objection to other bus operators using the system; shared use could help reduce infrastructure costs, he says. The first route could be operating within a year.

The combination of circumstances remains unique to Hong Kong, but a venture like this could encourage a reappraisal of trolleybus costs both by operators and manufacturers in Britain and elsewhere.

... BUT NOT FOR LIVERPOOL

An application by Merseytravel for a new 11km guided trolleybus system from the Albert Dock to Page Moss in Liverpool has been turned down. Transport minister, Glenda Jackson, outlined the Secretary of State's decision to accept the outcome of a public inquiry, where the inspector expressed

concerns about the need for the scheme, the route through the pedestrianised city centre and the site of a proposed park-and-ride facility; the inspector was also concerned about the possible effects on existing bus services and jobs in the bus industry.

TOPLESS IN SCARBOROUGH

It had to happen! East Yorkshire has launched an open-top minibus on a new service in Scarborough linking many of the resort's facilities. The bus, a 20-seat Mercedes-Benz 608D with Reeve

Burgess bodywork has been converted in the EYMS workshops in Hull and runs on an hourly frequency. The company says that the new route would be unsuitable for bigger open-top buses.



CONCERTED EFFORT

The £50m CERT (City of Edinburgh Rapid Transit) guided busway contract has been awarded to ConCERT, a consortium which includes FirstGroup and the construction firm Balfour Beatty. The other bidder on the shortlist was GoVia,

including the Go-Ahead Group and Volvo Bus. Other transport companies, including Stagecoach, had been interested in building and operating this busway, linking Edinburgh Airport and the Edinburgh Park development with the city centre.

BUS-TRAM INTEGRATION

Two Arriva companies have announced moves to provide better links between established bus networks and two of Britain's new tramway systems.

Arriva Midland North passengers on certain routes in the Wolverhampton area can buy a new Metro/Bus ticket from the driver, entitling them to travel by bus to Wolverhampton bus station and then on the newly-opened Midland Metro tram towards Birmingham. The all-day tickets, costing £3 (£2 children) are valid on any bus or tram within the West Midlands boundary.

Meanwhile Arriva North West is linking the new Trafford Centre into the Metrolink network via Stretford station. Six buses — ex-Arriva London North SLW class Scania N113/Wrights — are providing a 'near seamless' non-stop service.

CARLYLE'S NEW NAME

Carlyle plc has formed a new company, Carlyle Bus & Coach Ltd, to bring its Carlyle Parts & Service and Busparts operations under one banner. The company supplies a wide range of parts for all vehicle types, and has branches throughout Britain.

MAN LOW-FLOOR MIDI

MAN is to introduce a new low-floor midibus chassis in the UK, the 14.220, which will be available in lengths from 10.6m and uses the same 6.9-litre engine as the full-size 18.220, currently entering service with Stagecoach fleets, and can be supplied with ZF or Voith gearboxes. It comes just as DAF has announced its SB120 low-floor midibus chassis (see pages 17-19) and joins the Dennis Dart SLF and Volvo B6BLE in what is suddenly becoming a crowded market.

PREMIER GOES FOR A BURTON

Premier Travel Services, the coaching arm of Stagecoach Cambus, has been sold to Burton Coaches of Haverhill. Philip Eden, managing director of Stagecoach Cambus, said that the disposal 'was a logical step and will allow us to concentrate on our core business of local bus services.' The familiar Premier name will continue alongside Burton's own coaches. Cambus will retain its coaches used on National Express and Stagecoach Express operations.

WALLY'S 750th VOLVO

In 21 years Wallace Arnold, the Leeds-based holiday group, has bought 750 Volvos, and has recently added 51 new B10Ms with Plaxton bodywork to the fleet.

M4 BUS LANE OPEN

John Prescott opened the M4 bus lane on 7 June. Described as the first-ever bus lane on a major motorway in England, it gives exclusive use of the outside lane to buses, coaches and taxis over a 3.5mile stretch from Junction 3 to the beginning of the elevated section near Chiswick. More than 50 buses and 350 taxis an hour use this stretch and peakhour journey time reductions of 10min are forecast.

CIT+IL=ILT

From 1 June The Chartered Institute of Transport and the Institute of Logistics were integrated into a new body, the Institute of Logistics and Transport (ILT). The formation of the ILT is partly a response to the need for one major voice speaking on behalf of the transport and logistics sectors, but also reflects 'a broader meeting of minds and mutual interests of the two bodies and their members'. The combined ILT membership is around 24,000.

RAIL LINKS LAUNCHED

Virgin Trains launched four new rail link services in conjunction with Stagecoach at a lavish ceremony at London Euston Station on 27 May.

That afternoon, one of the services, linking Milton Keynes Central with Luton and Luton Airport, enjoyed its own individual ceremony. Two Berkhof-bodied Volvo B10Ms, formerly used on Oxford Tube duties but now transferred to Stagecoach United Counties operate over the route 10 times a day, seven days a week. The four-year old coaches have been extensively refurbished, complete with new moquette and painted in a new red, grey and white dedicated livery. Another similar coach will be prepared as a backup.

The service operates into the newly-opened bus station at Luton airport, making intermediate stops at Luton railway station and the Luton Gateway Hotel.

Three similar vehicles, transferred to Stagecoach Midland Red will maintain rail link services between Coventry and Stratford-upon-Avon and Bromsgrove and Redditch. The third operation, linking Macclesfield and Buxton, uses two low-floor Dennis Darts provided by Stagecoach East Midland.



Above:

The new Virgin Trains Rail Links scheme is quite similar to the livery previously carried by this coach, that of the Oxford Tube. PHILIP LAMB

Left:

The Virgin Trains Rail Link from Macclesfield to Buxton uses new Plaxton Pointer/Dennis Dart SPDs provided by Stagecoach East Midland. BOB SWEET

TRIDENT GOES PROVINCIAL

Following large number of low-floor double-deckers going into service in London, the Dennis Trident is now making its mark elsewhere.

Go-Ahead now has a number of Tridents in service. Oxford's Park&Ride is receiving 20 with Alexander dual door bodywork (right), while Brighton & Hove's two convertible open topers with East Lancs bodywork arrived just in time for the Derby (below). They may not appear as open-toppers in Brighton this year.

PHILIP LAMB/JOHN ALDRIDGE



Below:

The first five of a fleet of fully-accessible Dennis Tridents has been handed over to Lothian Region Transport, the first new low-floor buses in the fleet. They carry 76-seat two-door Alexander ALX400 bodies. They were due to be joined by five Plaxton President-bodied Tridents and the ten buses were to go into service on the cross-city 44 service at the beginning of July. They are painted in a special livery which includes the traditional madder/white colours, augmented by bright red and gold. Lothian is expecting another 10 Plaxton Tridents, as well as five Volvo B7L/Plaxtons, and has recently ordered 25 more Trident/Plaxtons and 25 Dennis Dart SPD/Plaxtons. RICHARD WALTER



Left:

Following the appearance of an East London Trident/Alexander in Stagecoach livery, Stagecoach Manchester is now receiving its own single-door buses. The first to be delivered is 613 (T613 MNF); 13 are for the Manchester-Stockport service 192.

JOHN YOUNG



On The Map

BARRY S. DOE FCIT, C.Math, MIMA

Recently, from FWT, have been maps for **Devon** (tel: 01392 382800); **Portsmouth City** (tel: 023 9283 4613 — note new style telephone numbers for the area) and Centro's **Solihull** area (tel: 0121 200 2700); also for **Oxford Bus** an update of its map, now showing more detail for the city centre blow up (tel: 01865 785400). Also, the **Nottinghamshire** system map is available, still with no improvements to the Nottingham City section (tel: 0115 924 0000); and a new combined timetable and map in the excellent **Stoke-on-Trent** series, but this for the Staffordshire area of Audley and Knutton (NW Newcastle-under-Lyme) (tel: 01785 223344).

Dorset, Bournemouth Borough and the Borough of Poole have joined with operators Bournemouth Transport and Wilts & Dorset to produce the first ever comprehensive map of the **Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch** conurbation (tel: 01202 262011). From Pindar it shows all principal roads with those that are bus routes coloured green with reversed-out names. Route numbers are mauve for Yellow Buses, red for Wilts & Dorset and black for others. Blow ups of Bournemouth and Poole town centres are added. The reverse has route-descriptions (in numerical order) with frequencies plus an index and miscellaneous operator and tourist details. A first-rate publication.

Kent has produced a **Kent Thames-side** map jointly with Dartford and the Bluewater retail park (tel: 0845 7696996). It is diagrammatic but very clear as it shows all routes as single lines with numbers alongside (those serving Bluewater in blue and others in grey). There are blow-ups of Dartford and Gravesend and a separate map of long-distance routes. The reverse has a frequency chart and the whole is very successful for a small (A3) sheet.

In Wales, an excellent new series from **Flintshire** (tel: 01352 704035). Three maps have all the bus timetables, each with a full county map plus a blow-up for the relevant area: A for Holywell, B for South and C for East Flintshire, the latter covering Mold and Shotton. From FWT the main map has green routes with red numbers for hourly

or better, black for less but daily, green for occasional and grey where the timetables are on one of the other two sheets. Blow-ups name all roads. The key is bilingual.

There have been major changes for the better in **Pembrokeshire** (tel: 01437 775227). Rather poor books have been replaced by five booklets (now in 24-hour clock) with, between them, superb coloured town plans for Cardigan, Fishguard, Haverfordwest, Milford Haven, Narberth, Neyland, Pembroke, Pembroke Dock, St David's, Saundersfoot, Tenby: 22 plans in all, as each one appears twice, once in English and again in Welsh, allowing a total re-working of each map for each language. This is quite something for a county that used to be rather 'too English' in nature (it was known as 'little England beyond Wales') and Pindar is to be congratulated on such excellent work.

To complement the above there is then a separate system map, also from Pindar. This shows routes in red, but green if served on fewer than five days a week and with background shading indicating which book is relevant. The reverse has an index and a frequency-chart (the latter limited to days of operation) and, again, these appear once for each language. This is one of the best productions to emanate from the Principality.

From **Dundee** is something rather different: an incomplete and misleading map! It says it is a 'Guide to Bus Services in and Around Dundee'. The cover shows City of Dundee sponsorship so one would assume it is both neutral and complete, despite the fact that it also shows Travel Dundee and Strathtay Bus & Coach logos. Wrong. It is a system map for just those two companies, though nowhere does it say so.

From FWT the map itself is of the usual high quality, but I am amazed that any bus map of the area is happy to show the Tay Road Bridge as not being a bus route and therefore cut off from Fife except by rail! This, I assume, is because Stagecoach Fife was not asked to contribute — though to the best of my knowledge I thought even Strathtay itself still ran a service to Wormit. Needless to say none of those foreign places over the river (including St Andrews), all of which are linked to Dundee by very frequent services, gets a mention in the index of places served (tel: 01382 433125). Of course it could merely be that the City had forgotten the new road bridge is there (it was, after all, only built in 1965). Cynical? Well, they do still call the railway station plain 'Tay Bridge', a title it lost in 1966!

BUSES ON THE net!

The Ian Allan Group and Ian Allan Publishing Ltd are now on the Internet and there is direct access to the Buses site via this address:

www.ianallanpub.co.uk/buses

We shall be updating the site regularly with news of our latest features and competition details. You can also order Buses direct through the website.



Happy surfing!

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Advance Notice: The LOTS Autumn Transport Spectacular is to be held at Picketts Lock on 6th November 1999

THE FENTON FILE

The concept of trolleybuses moves in and out of fashion; as the Department of Transport etc etc has turned down Merseyside's bid for trolleybuses, MIKE FENTON looks back at the previous trolleybus fervour of the 1980s. That got a bit further — but not much . . .

Whilst it is not the intention to feature retired vehicles in this column, one in particular does deserve a mention; Britain's newest trolleybus — South Yorkshire Transport 2450. Based on a Dennis Dominator chassis, of which the operator had several hundred, the trolleybus was GEC powered with an auxiliary Dorman three-cylinder diesel generator to permit off-wire manoeuvring and, as a chassis, was displayed on the Hestair-Dennis stand at the 1984 NEC Show. A 78-seat Alexander body was subsequently fitted and the vehicle delivered to South Yorkshire PTE in June 1985, initially as B450 CKW but later re-registered C45 HDT.

In those early days, it could be found running up and down a private test track adjacent to Doncaster Racecourse, but as time went by enthusiasm for the project waned.

Nearby Sheffield acquired its super expensive, Supertram system and, in neighbouring West Yorkshire, plans to re-introduce trolleybuses to the streets of Bradford came to nothing thus denying an opportunity to use the vehicle there.

The 'nineties saw the project all but dead with the bus in store — unused and unwanted — and maybe that's how things would have stayed had not representatives of the Sandtoft Museum entered into negotiations with its South Yorkshire PTE owners. Thus following a successful outcome, 2450 arrived at the museum in August 1994 and two years later was running under



Britain's newest trolleybus, South Yorkshire Dennis Dominator 2450, circuits Sandtoft in 1997.
MIKE FENTON

SERVICE EXTRA — SERVICE EXTRA SERVICE EXTRA

Sooner or later on a customer service training course it is pointed out that you don't need to give your service to every customer to make them all feel positive. Be nice to a baby, so the theory goes, and everyone within sight of the niceness, will feel warmly towards you, your company and life in general.

And so it definitely is on buses. Stop for runners, better still stop for runners where they are running, and people on board smile happily; hand the ticket to a toddler's outstretched hand and the same applies. Equally do something outrageously uncustomer-friendly, or just inappropriate, and it's not only the person treated thus who feels aggrieved. And such behaviour can be quite tangential to the business of transporting passengers and still have a negative impact.

On a couple of occasions recently I've been on buses where driver behaviour not directed in any way at passengers has left me and others feeling negative towards them. On one, in Brighton, a helpful and chatty driver came upon a car halted incorrectly at a red repeating light in a complicated array of traffic lights. Suddenly our jolly driver leapt half out of his cab and yelled 'Move the (delete expletive) Volvo!!' This predictably had no impact on the Volvo driver but a considerable one inside the bus as disapproving mutterings erupted all around. I had a conductor colleague when I worked in Brighton who used to joke that 'Hurry along please!' was fine at one end of his route as was 'Come on, shift yourselves' at the other but that woe betide you if you got them the wrong way round. The driver above had picked the 'Hurry along please' end of the route for his outburst.

On another occasion last summer, I was feeling very sorry for a Stagecoach driver who had been delayed 45 minutes by very badly managed roadwork traffic lights and, to boot, was being wound up by an idiot in a Range Rover who seemed to have a thing about bus drivers, when he spoilt things by averting to a colleague passing in an upbound bus, on no evidence whatsoever, that the mess had been caused by a 'bunch of Paddies' which he then repeated several times.

JULIAN OSBORNE continues his occasional series looking at the service element of bus services

Obviously if the negative behaviour is aimed directly at their passengers, as we all sit and watch the boarding process, it helps even less. A surprising number of drivers, for instance, still seem unable to resist the 'what's it say on the front?' riposte to routing enquiries, even on services that serve the same stops in both directions and the old jerky departure from the stop for difficult customers is still alive and well. On the other hand, all manner of good humour and helpfulness has quite the opposite effect on everybody watching. One local driver was recently to be found holding a baby whilst its parent sorted out payment sources; on another occasion that same driver assisted two kids frantically trying to attract the attention of their grandmother in the street by gently tooting the bus horn. The rest of us smiled warmly.

The Brighton driver above, whilst offending no customer directly, was not doing much for the industry's downmarket image. I continue to worry about this. No-one who works for a bus company can appear on any television programme without having some other interest. 'Rory is a bus inspector, but also . . .' and the embarrassed silence that any one announcing their employment in the industry engenders shows just how far removed from many people's lives the bus has become. Recently in the paper, a councillor was writing on behalf of a constituent worried about the loss of a local bus service; he, the subtext is clear, is not writing on behalf of himself because he doesn't use things like buses but this poor, sad woman does. I reckon the industry, or its marketing advisers, should find several 'personalities' who use buses and market them for all they're worth. And not as people doing something vaguely eccentric, but as people doing something rational and in no way unusual!

I said I'd check a poll of passenger concerns to see how it chimed with my criteria for satisfaction with services listed in my May column. I did and found a more exact fit than I thought as 'value for money' apparently didn't make the top five; perhaps more of us are on Travelcards and the like than I imagined! And I tried to change an offending reference to the Metrobus in the last piece in the light of Richard Cranmer's letter as it occurred to me that what I am reacting to is the current standard of presentation of Metrobuses by one or two London companies, not the bus itself. Our local representatives are due to leave us later this year and I will try then to give them an objective and fond farewell. They have, after all, been a part of west London life for 20 years.

BUSES ON THE NET

Up to date travel information — coming soon to a PC near you?

RICHARD DELAHOY MCIT investigates . . .

The bus industry has long been criticised for the fragmented and haphazard availability of information about routes, times and fares. Often it is difficult to get comprehensive, up to date information about one's own locality, let alone for other parts of the country. The Government has high hopes for a nationwide service by the year 2000 — that's *next* year, and it's clear that the Internet can play a big part in making information easily accessible anywhere in the UK.

Countywide journey planners

A number of local authorities have taken the lead in producing comprehensive sites, offering information about bus and train services in their areas, using journey planner software. Existing sites for Cumbria, Hertfordshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, West Yorkshire, Blackpool, Suffolk and Buckinghamshire can all be accessed simply through Software Logic's 'Station Master' site at www.ukbus.co.uk. So how do they shape up?

Recently I tried a series of journey enquiries, some simple, some more complex or obscure, to see how well each system performed. The tests were not intended to be a rigorous analysis of each site, but rather to see how they handled a typical enquiry. Overall, I was highly impressed by the speed and ease of use. A simple screen such as the West Yorkshire one illustrated, prompts users to enter details of their required journey. A drop down list of major places is included, but you can type in any location — if it is not found, a list of near matches will be offered instead. The next available journey is then displayed, together with earlier and later trips and a full day's summary. Quite complex journeys involving two or three changes are clearly displayed and details can be printed out — for example, see the Suffolk search for a cross boundary journey, from Ipswich to Colchester (in Essex). In many cases, it is also possible to click on a button to view the complete timetable for any individual service.

Of course, such systems are only as good as the underlying data. All bus operators are required by law to copy their registrations to the relevant local authorities, so the data *should* be up to date. Perhaps the biggest limiting factor is in the selection of place names — generally, journey planner software will only be able to search against timing points specified in each operator's registration. Inevitably, this will mean that not all searches will work. Rural routes are often easier to identify than town services, where timing points may not be so obvious. However, the single biggest omission is data about fares; this falls into the 'too difficult' category at present, but will casual users, the very people that the Government would love to tempt out of their cars and on to public transport accept this?

In most cases, the sample journeys I input produced sensible, predictable answers. But there were a few bizarre results — for instance, the Suffolk planner told me to remain on a bus that went past Ipswich rail station (a timing point) and continue on to the bus station, in order to catch another bus back to the rail station, to connect with a train! Another apparently simple enquiry suggested that

Blackpool's journey planner is not yet aware of the town's famous trams: I asked to go from Gynn Square to Broadwater on a weekday lunchtime, a direct tram journey taking around 25 minutes. The suggested 'solution' involved a wait of 90 minutes, before catching three separate buses with a total journey time of 75 minutes! Such nonsense must be corrected quickly, if users are to have confidence in Internet-based information services.

Setting standards

A number of projects are under way, including EUROSPIN and the JourneyWeb LINK project, designed to establish common standards, particularly to help when information is needed about longer, cross boundary journeys where the data is not all available from one journey planning system. Meanwhile, one way to build confidence is to provide independent accreditation for sites that can demonstrate that they are kept up to date and which identify any shortcomings in their data, such as not including certain operators' services.

The Institute of Logistics & Transport has designed an accreditation process, recognised by the Government (DETR), and it is hoped that the first journey planner sites will be accredited by July. Already the www.pti.org.uk site maintained by John Austin has been accredited as a gateway to sites that offer public transport information. I strongly recommend the PTI site as an excellent way to find out what information is available about any particular geographic area.

Top marks in my brief survey go to Cumbria, which offers maps as well as timetable and journey information; bottom, I'm afraid, comes Buckinghamshire, whose screens are not so user friendly (for instance, asking for your destination before the start point) and whose speed of response was relatively slow. But at least Buckinghamshire offers a planner — many authorities do not, yet. However, Brian Marshall of Software Logic tells me that there are a significant number of systems at an advanced stage of development, including Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Greater Manchester, Norfolk, Stoke on Trent and a bilingual site for Denbighshire/Sir Ddinbych. Even more exciting are the plans to build region wide planners — one covering the whole of the north of England and another for Yorkshire are expected to be launched later this year. So, use www.pti.org.uk to try out the planners that are already on-line and watch out for some exciting developments over the next few months.

New on the Net

The Ian Allan site is now fully operational, so if you want to find out the latest about Britain's best selling bus magazine, you can go directly to www.ianallanpub.co.uk/buses; or type /presbus to access sister magazine *Preserved Bus*. For information about the whole group, try www.ianallan.com. Other new sites worth a look include The Confederation of Passenger Transport — www.cpt-uk.org — for the industry's trade body. The Omnibus Society is also now connected — find them at www.omnibussoc.org. Scania Bus & Coach Sales' new site — www.scaniabusandcoach.co.uk — is useful if, like me, you have trouble remembering the differences between their different chassis codes! Meanwhile, yet another London bus news site is at www.ukbus.com/London.

Finally, the full text of the Government's 'daughter' paper on the future policy for bus services can be found at www.local-government.detr.gov.uk/brbus/index.htm.

Update

The Arriva feature, promised in the last article, has been held over until the new-look sites have been completed. However, if your interest is in Arriva Southern Counties (London & Country group, Kentish Bus and Maidstone & District), a very helpful enthusiast site can be found at <http://kenlansdowne.future.easyspace.com/Arriva>.

For a list of entries at Britain's biggest bus rally, Showbus is now also available at www.showbus.com as well as its old .co.uk address. A further site from the company with the famous stripes is www.stagecoach-transit.co.uk, while other sites mentioned in previous issues which have since been updated and are worth a second look include www.stagecoach-oxford.co.uk and www.citybus.com.hk (thanks to Stuart Dobie for letting me know about this update, following the Stagecoach takeover). Some information about FirstPMT can now be found at www.touristnetuk.com/WM/firstpmt/index.htm, while the FirstLeeds site mentioned a couple of months back (www.firstleeds.co.uk) is now being upgraded and includes an intriguing page inviting students with clean driving licences to train as part time bus drivers.

Above:
Simple instructions from Suffolk's Station Master.

Left:
West Yorkshire PTE (Metro)'s journey planner

SAD, SMALL STORY

It is not often that a new type of bus appears in reasonable quantity on the London scene, and then vanishes altogether, but that seems to be what is happening with the Marshall Minibus. London General had 15, most of which were delivered in 1996, but all now seem to have returned to the maker, which has just been taken over by ERF. Some of them had previously been hired by London General to the new Limebourne company.

The other London operator of the type is First CentreWest, which has 16 of the newer Mark 2 version, built in 1997 and 1998. They are, or were, in its Ealing Buses fleet, but some of these have now also returned to Marshalls. A fine point with these is that, according to notices displayed inside, provision of wheelchair access was funded by Ealing Council. Situations change, and now of course all new buses in London at least have disabled access.

Between them these two companies seem to have taken the bulk of production so far of these buses. When introduced the model was the only real low-floor minibus, but now of course there is competition from the short Dennis Dart MPD and Optare Solo (running with Travel London), and with low-floor (or perhaps, lower floor) version of at least one van-derived minibus promised.

The return of the London General buses is perhaps a clue to what has happened, as London General and London Central between them are taking delivery of 15 (now where did I hear that figure before?) Marshall-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs, with a type designation of DMS (I've heard those initials before too) for operation from Putney and Bexleyheath Garages.

CentreWest is also taking delivery of Marshall-bodied Dart SLFs, but the company is a big buyer of Marshall-bodied Darts, including 9.3m long ones coded DMS, so one cannot come to any conclusions here.

Also fast vanishing at CentreWest are the final buses of the once 90-strong RW class — Wright-bodied Renault-Dodge 75s new in 1990. They combine rather high quality bodies with less durable chassis, you may recall, and were subject to some reworking a few years ago. Subsequently most have moved on, many to First Beeline, and their use there has brought more than its fair share of correspondence in the pages of this magazine. Now a fair number of these 28-seat RWs at Beeline are being replaced by four-year-old 32-seat conventional Plaxton-bodied Darts surplus to the CentreWest fleet.

New to London General is DMS3, a Marshall-bodied short Dennis Dart; maybe a replacement for Marshall Minibuses?
GEOFF RIXON



GARAGE CLOSURES

One of the worst aspects of privatisation of the old National Bus Company subsidiaries came about when some of the former London Country operations (by then divided into four separate concerns) proved hard to sell, and ownership of their garages was sold off separately. The latest reverberation of this 1980s move came with the sudden closure of Arriva Croydon & North Surrey's Leatherhead garage, originally scheduled for the end of May. At a very late stage that became the end of April, with services ceasing to run from the garage after Friday 30 April, with the demolition men moving in immediately. That, I am told, produced a remarkable gathering not of Arriva buses, but of Arriva service vehicles, as every one that could be spared from subsidiaries for miles around was rushed in to help remove the furniture and fittings.

Leatherhead thus becomes yet another former Country Area garage that has vanished in the face of property redevelopment. Even in what became just London & Country few garages remain from the old days — by which I mean the late 1980s. Addlestone, Chelsham, Dorking, Godstone, Leatherhead, Reigate and Staines have now all gone, though new bases have opened in Croydon, Hounslow, Merstham and Woking.

Two other suburban garages have also been in the news. At St Albans the former London Country garage (not used as a bus garage for some time) has now been demolished, efforts at gaining listed status and preserving it as a possible museum being unsuccessful. At Borehamwood the former BTS base adjoining the railway station used by London Sovereign has also closed for redevelopment.

London Sovereign has leased part of Edgware Garage, long closed by LT, and operates from inside the building. I make this distinction, because Metroline also runs from Edgware Garage, but — strangely perhaps — only from outside the building.

Back south of the River Thames, the Leatherhead closure has resulted in the transfer of two of its main routes. The 465 (Dorking-Teddington) has gone to Tellings-Golden Miller, with the seven Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton buses used on it, while the 85 (Kingston-Putney) has gone to London United. Its rare Northern Counties bodied DAF double-deckers dating from 1998 are operated from London United's Fulwell Garage, but for the moment are still owned by Arriva. Operation of the remaining routes moved to other Arriva garages.

LANE PENALTIES

The other day I was on a bus in Ealing. The bus was in a bus lane, but ahead of it were eight cars — the same number of cars as in the other section of road alongside the bus. It has always seemed pointless to have all these bus lanes if enforcement is poor or non-existent.

Now there is a pilot scheme with surveillance cameras in the London boroughs of Croydon, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham and Newham, following trials on Archway Road. Drivers spotted by the cameras receive a bill for an £80 penalty charge, reduced to £40 if the fine is paid within 14 days.

The new surveillance cameras have been funded jointly by these London boroughs and LT Buses, and it is said that the boroughs are also able to use some of the 200 cameras operated by the Metropolitan Police and the Traffic Control Systems Unit.

CONNECTING WITH . . . JUST WHAT?

The actual operation of tube trains on the Stratford-North Greenwich section of the Jubilee Line finally started on 14 May, a couple of weeks later than previously announced. The bus service alterations connected with it (this column last month) had already been made, and a further set of route changes will occur in the Summer when the North Greenwich-Waterloo section opens.

A feature of several of the new stations is the impressive bus stations above them (or alongside) which are also of striking and varied design, and I set out to view them on a recent Saturday, travelling by Central Line tube to Stratford, only to discover that service on the Jubilee extension was suspended for the weekend. There were plenty of notices on Central Line stations about weekend engineering work on it, but no mention of the Jubilee Line. Before people

talk airily about road-rail co-ordination they might give some more thought to rail-rail co-ordination.

Talking of Underground matters, London Central and London General are to provide 17 double-deckers for additional buses on route 133 from 3 July to 5 September, when the Northern Line's Bank branch is suspended in both directions between Moorgate and Kennington.

A notable tube replacement operation over a Bank Holiday weekend between Liverpool Street and Leytonstone needed some 80 buses, many of which were provided by First Capital, which was helped as usual by various small operators. But a notable contribution, in terms of distance from home before they even started carrying passengers, was by First Northampton, with three Volvo double-deckers.

NEW TENDERS

Arriva companies have retained contracts for seven routes in north and south London. All are for five years, and will take effect from October. Arriva London North will continue to run routes 144 (Edmonton Green-Muswell Hill), 279 (Holloway-Waltham Cross), N279 (Victoria-Upshire) and W3 (Finsbury Park-Northumberland Park), while Arriva Croydon & North Surrey — a company which could do with some good news — will continue with routes 403 (West Croydon-Warlingham Park Hospital), 407 (Sutton-Croydon-Caterham Valley) and school route 627 (Woodcote Green-Worcester Park).

The north London routes will all gain (in the fullness of time, no doubt) new low-floor double-deckers — indeed the pioneering low-floor Scania that used to be on the 144 have been whisked off to Arriva North West, some to join Manchester's Metrolink to the Trafford Centre — while existing buses will continue on the 403 and 627, and the 407 will have new full-size low-floor single-deckers. This last contract shows how a good level of service can help build or rebuild a service. Before what was Londonlinks took it over it had been run, somewhat indifferently, on a half-hourly frequency by South London with Metrobuses. Londonlinks ran every 15 minutes with new Optare MetroRiders, and soon found themselves overwhelmed on some journeys. Larger buses in

the shape of new and secondhand Dennis Darts were hastily acquired, and the route has subsequently become host to an assortment of Darts, Leyland Atlanteans, Leyland and Volvo Olympians, Volvo B10M double-deckers and even the occasional Mercedes-Benz minibus.

The MetroRiders and Atlanteans have vanished, but the route is still a remarkable mix of double-deckers and single-deckers. Perhaps the new Dart-sized DAF (see p17) will make its debut here.

Other news from Arriva Croydon & North Surrey was the cut-back in early June of route 408 (Croydon-Epsom-Leatherhead-Guildford), which has been shortened to run only as far as Leatherhead on weekdays, and Epsom on Sundays. At the same time it now serves all stops in the LT area, instead of running limited-stop over this section. The Guildford part of the route is now covered by an extension of the 479 (previously Kingston-Epsom-Leatherhead-Bookham), which now runs on via Effingham to Guildford.

The 408 was a bit of a flagship route, commercially operated, but was an early recipient of low-floor single-deckers in the shape of Dennis Lances with Wright Pathfinder bodies. Surrey County Council put £250,000 towards the cost of these, and LT itself provided a part of the cost of a fifth bus in recognition of the part of the route in its area.

IN BRIEF

A Routemaster in red livery is LT's new Mobile Travel Information Centre, and will be used at a variety of exhibitions, sporting events, museums, concerts and Freshers' Fairs — the last-named are held for newcomers to colleges and universities where LT can promote its Student Photocard.

Richmond upon Thames Council is the third local authority to sign up to LT's new Bus Quality Commitment scheme.

White Horse Fast Ferries has begun a London waterbus service between Canary Wharf and the Embankment. It is intended for commuters as well as tourists and is partly supported by LT's new London River Services arm.

Ensign Bus is proposing to take over route 348 (Romford-Lakeside-Thurrock College) from Eastern National, which is withdrawing the route because it is not commercially viable. Ensign plans to make changes to the route and also to extend it to Bluewater and Gravesend.

SHORTENED . . . AND SPOILT?

Shortening bus routes to improve reliability seems to be the flavour of the year with the planners at LT Buses. A number of instances have already been mentioned in recent issues, and now there are more. It is planned to remove the extension of route 290 over Staines Bridge (to Sainsbury's) and cut the route back slightly to run Staines-Richmond, as little use is made of the section in question and congestion on the bridge causes unreliability.

On route 159 (Streatham-Oxford Circus, with alternate journeys continuing to Baker Street) all buses would run along Oxford Street to Marble Arch and terminate there, to make the service easier to control, improving reliability, we are told. Such changes give me the uneasy feeling that some are being made to improve regularity to the detriment of those passengers who previously travelled over the affected sections, and that regularity could equally well be improved by putting in more resources — in other words a more realistic timetable — but that would cost money.

Meanwhile revised routes 28 (Harrow Road-Wandsworth), and 31 (Camden Town-Notting Hill) and new route 328 (Golders Green-Chelsea) all began running on Saturday 29 May. All are operated by CentreWest.

TGM's NEW GROUP

As we go to press news has broken that Tellings Golden Miller is on the expansion trail. Firstly it has bought the rather larger Capital Logistics operation which was developed from Capital of West Drayton from being an airport-based coach operation to a supplier of London Transport bus services. Capital Logistics got off to a cracking start with its operation of the U3 from Heathrow to Uxbridge, and then

got into a bit of a mess with the 60. Capital operates more than 170 vehicles, while TGM has around 75.

However TGM is set to get even bigger; it seems it is to form a group with MK Metro, Classic Coaches and Midland Choice — all of which have at least something to do with Julian Peddle — to form the Status Bus & Coach Group. No doubt more details will emerge in due course.



Above:
Metrolink is now running rather more of its Plaxton President-bodied Dennis Tridents on Archway Road route 43.
GEOFF RIXON



Left:
Last month we showed pictures of Dennis Darts at Heathrow; another colourful Dart is British Airways' T5 BUS, promoting the merits of the controversial Terminal 5 development at Heathrow.
MARK LYONS

MILLAR'S *Tales*

ALAN MILLAR'S MONTHLY COLUMN OF
MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Whatever happened to...? ...the Mini Pointer Dart

Last July, we carried news that Dennis and Plaxton were teaming up to produce the 8.5m Mini Pointer Dart, a short low-floor midi aimed at the same market as the Optare Solo and the Marshall Minibus and based on the best-selling Dart SLF.

As we report elsewhere this month, the Marshall has limped into the new ownership of ERF and Western Star, but the MPD has done surprisingly well. The Plaxton/Dennis partnership followed the earlier development of the 'stretched' Super Pointer Dart and fitted in with their short-lived plans for a full-scale merger.

Ironically some of the first 8.5m Darts ended up being bodied by Marshall and Wright, but the real Plaxton MPD has begun to notch

up some useful sales with orders placed in recent months by Yorkshire Traction, Stagecoach and Arriva, as well as by small operators. If its greatest appeal can be put down to its familiar driveline and the manoeuvrability of its short wheelbase, it's next greatest strength lies in its lack of German chassis parts. For Arriva at least is taking MPDs in place of Mercedes-Benz Varios which appear to have been causing undue grief and anguish where their simpler predecessors ran happily before.

Quite where this leaves the various projects for low-floor Vario-based midis is anyone's guess, but the MPD is establishing a healthy niche for itself in the meantime.

CAPITAL CONUNDRUMS

London Transport's once legendary standards continue to slip. Last December, it was an Uxbridge bus stop riddled with mis-spellings and comprehensively wrong direction information. Now I've got evidence of another howler a mere ticket roll's throw away from Waterloo station.

The capital's public transport organisation may have put the 'LT' into 'service alteration', but — thanks, maybe, to the capital's glottal stop — also managed to take the 'B' out of Camberwell.

And farther south, Colin Brazier has written in from Bickley in a state of publicity-induced confusion. His local bus stop has gained a fine council-sponsored poster bearing the slogan 'Your

borough, Your bus' and showing a wheelchair occupant rolling herself aboard a red low-floor double-decker. Only the bus and the borough couldn't be more distant from Bickley, where Bromley is his borough and his bus is run by Stagecoach Selkent. The poster shows Arriva DAF DLA21 somewhere in the outer suburbs of north London. 'Maybe there's a photo of a Selkent Dart posted somewhere in Enfield,' he wonders with a shade more charity than the situation deserves.



WRITE DIRECT TO MILLAR'S TALES

Please send any stories, photos, cuttings and other information on off-beat bus matters direct to:

Buses
PO Box 3759, Glasgow
G41 5YN

OLYMPIANS WITH A MISSION . . .

Despite their less-than-happy first lives, stretched Leyland Olympian coaches seem neither to die nor fade away. Instead, these often over-sized, inappropriately geared and generally under-loved machines are cascaded gradually through various secondary roles in life until they find someone with the patience and faith needed to keep them running.

In such a vein, faith appears to be the operative word, for no less an organisation than the Jesus Army has at least two of these testing types in its care. Clearly, its faith extends beyond its obvious belief in the powers of a superior

being to mere follies of automotive engineering.

Aiden Proctor, who encountered said organisation's vehicles assembling for a convention in Sheffield recently, tells me that one of the relatively more common ECW examples was there along with B145 GSC, half of the rare 65-seat pair fitted with Alexander's lowheight RDC body and operated successively by SMT and Cambus before vanishing into obscurity. Both had been modified to include gas-fuelled cooking equipment.



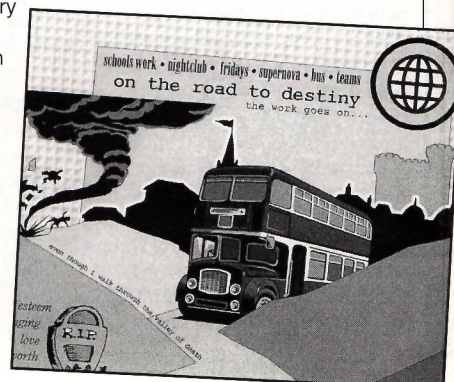
The Jesus Army's rare
Alexander-bodied
Olympian coach.
AIDEN PROCTOR

. . . AND FAITHFUL REPRODUCTIONS

On a similarly Christian theme, reader Chris Brock has uncovered a fetching computer-generated advertisement for the Norwich Youth for Christ bus project, a venture that in real life uses a converted Bristol/ECW VR as a drop-in centre dispensing help and advice to job seekers in rural communities.

As most of you must realise, the advertisement shows a Bristol/ECW double-decker of a slightly earlier age, an almost accurate representation of a Brighton, Hove & District FLF let down only by the oversize bottom deck windows. Forget the flaws, please, for the good news is that this is a product of some of the latest graphics available with Microsoft computer software. There also is an even more accurate image of a London Metrobus, enabling transport organisations to start showing something a lot closer to a real life bus on their off-the-peg publicity and a lot less like all those Italian citybuses or wrong-way-round Tonka toys we've been featuring in recent months.

Another image in need of replacement is the PMT Red Rider Bristol VR featured in May 'Tales'. Not only is this Merseyside bus the unlikely icon on flyers for a Derby night club, but Peter Moss has sent me a copy of Bedfordshire's concessionary fares leaflet complete with the same vehicle in glorious green tint. It seems there's a library picture of this aged double-decker (taken before PMT adopted Crosville's alphanumeric fleetnumbering) going the rounds. Should someone tell the library to update its collection or just buy into one of the new graphics packages?



IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF BUSES . . .

First, as I revealed in April 'Tales', National Express has been elevated into the Top Ten with a Divine Comedy record. Now East Yorkshire Motor Services is doing its bit for youth culture and especially one prominent source of it in Hull.

The company's ultra traditional crimson and ivory livery may not smack instantly of all that's fashionable and young. Nor, for that matter, does the EYMS brass band, but reader James Dunkley tells me that the musical busmen provided the brass arrangements for the B-sides of songs released last year by Hull's own highly successful chart-topping band, The Beautiful South. I'm assured that, despite the near similar spelling, the track named 'I'll Sail This Ship Alone' isn't a subtle salute to EYMS managing director Peter Shipp.

Mind you, EYMS needs all the popularity it can generate just now, for *The Sun* gave great prominence recently to a letter

sent to the parent of a passenger claiming compensation for a jacket allegedly damaged on one of its school buses. The letter came on headed notepaper and carried the Scarborough depot manager's name, but it appears that someone of a less diplomatic disposition had effected a devastating forgery. For, just as the company was ready to settle the dispute, out went an 'official' letter describing the passenger's claim in the strongest and most insulting terms. It didn't say the claim was 'utter bollards', but I think you'll probably get the picture of what this unhelpful and anonymous joker had to say.



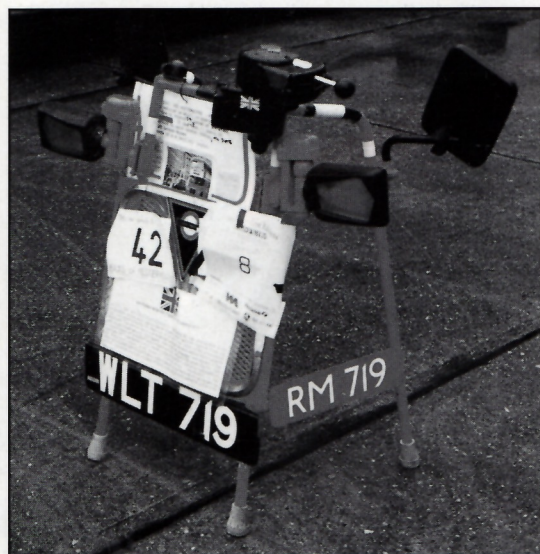
. . . EAT ON

Last month, cooked Roe was on the menu at a Glasgow bus terminus. Now, John Lidstone has evidence of an apparent catering connection for Bus Eireann at Urlingford. Just don't ask for a Tiger Stew.

THE ROUTEMASTER'S INDIAN ZIMMER

So you thought the London Routemaster would finally be defeated by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act? Not necessarily, if this picture is to be believed, for all that's needed is to shrink a radiator, and salvage a set of mirrors, a gear selector, registration number and bonnet number to create the ultimate in low-floor accessible transport — the AEC/Park Royal zimmer frame. You can still persuade a friend to shout 'Hold tight, please' before you set off down the aisles of LT's Frank Pick

Memorial Eventide Home, but there could still be one important drawback. It will never catch on unless it's got that distinctive engine/gearbox whine.



As marketing people would say, this idea's got legs.
JOHN G. LIDSTONE

GETTING TO THE 'ROUTE' OF THE RT'S NAME

For years, I've been led to believe that if that most famous of all London Transport type-codes, the RT, stood for anything, it was 'Regent Type' or 'Regent Three', but someone else has a better idea.

On a recent visit to London, Mrs M sent me off with my Cats' Protection League-sponsored bus map and directions of how to find 'The Camden Bus', a North London estate agency fashioned out of what turned out to be RT2157. She had encountered the retired double-decker a few weeks earlier, and when I found it I discovered that either estate agent Charles Webb or *The Daily*

Telegraph — a cutting from which is framed next to said bus — has a new answer to an old bus quiz question.

For one of them has decided that the red RT bricked and fenced into the backstreet gap site is a 1948 'Route Traveller' — which just goes to show where too much logical thinking gets you. If an RM is a Routemaster, then it seems perfectly credible that the RT should be an earlier member of the 'Route' family of London buses. And, of course, every estate agent knows buyers are more likely to be attracted by an exciting description of even the most mobile pieces of property.



ENQUIRE WITHIN

WHAT IS MULTIPLEX WIRING?

The new DAF Bus SB120, described elsewhere in this issue, is the latest bus to hit the market with multiplex wiring. Mercedes-Benz uses it in the Citaro citybus which has yet to be launched in Britain, but it was pioneered in this market on the Optare Solo and also is on the Wright Fusion articulated body on FirstGroup's Volvo B10LAs. Because this is new technology, we assume it must not only be a good thing, but something really clever. So what is it and what are the supposed advantages?

Essentially, it's a simplified wiring system that saves the weight, complication and maintenance requirements of traditional cabling. Compared with its O405N predecessor, the Citaro has 4km less cabling.

On the new DAF, for example, the electrics operate through modules placed close to the four corners of the vehicle, and are linked to a central computer located behind the driver's cab. The computer technology does away with the need for fuses and relays, and digital signals are sent through smaller cables.

The end result should be a lighter weight system that makes buses quicker and cheaper to manufacture, cheaper to maintain and which will be more reliable.

Added to that, multiplexing makes it far easier to diagnose faults on the vehicle and creates almost infinite possibilities to add other electronic equipment such as digital tachographs (when they are finally authorised by the European Union) and satellite navigation systems.

EAST LONDON IN WALES AGAIN!

Once again Stagecoach East London buses were placed in service in North Wales for the Ffestiniog Railway Gala on 1-3 May. This time the vehicles were a bit different; two Dennis Darts were used for the through service between Porthmadog and Caernarfon, to avoid tree damage which double-deckers experienced last August. Prototype Leyland Titan T1 ran the section of service between Tremadog and Penrhyndeudraeth, overlapping with the Darts, while a new Trident ran a shuttle service, 493, between Porthmadog and the Ffestiniog Railway's works at Glanypwll. This was almost certainly the first low-floor double-decker to run in Wales. JOHN YOUNG was there with his camera.



Above:

The main part of the 15 service this year was run by Dennis Darts, to avoid tree damage which affected double-deckers on the service last August. DW26 (NDZ 3026) is a Wright Handybus-bodied Dart with single-piece windscreen.



Above:

Almost certainly the first low-floor double-decker to run in Wales was Stagecoach East London Alexander ALX400-bodied Dennis Trident TA42 (T642 KPU) on the 496 shuttle service between Porthmadog and Glanypwll.

Right:

London Transport's first Leyland Titan, T1 (THX 401S) is still in service with Stagecoach East London; it is seen at Penrhyndeudraeth.

Below:

The other Dart was a little less usual; PD86 (M86 WBW) is a two-door Dart transferred to East London from Stagecoach Oxford.



MOST SINCERE FLATTERY?

Dutch Menace for Dennis

STEPHEN MORRIS describes a brand new DAF chassis for the British market — which looks just a touch familiar . . .



It goes without saying that the Dennis Dart has been a remarkable phenomenon. It is the vehicle which has propelled Dennis to the forefront of the British bus industry in a way which few would have dared to predict a decade ago. It wouldn't be true to say it has been entirely without rival, but it has left any opposition trailing in its wake.

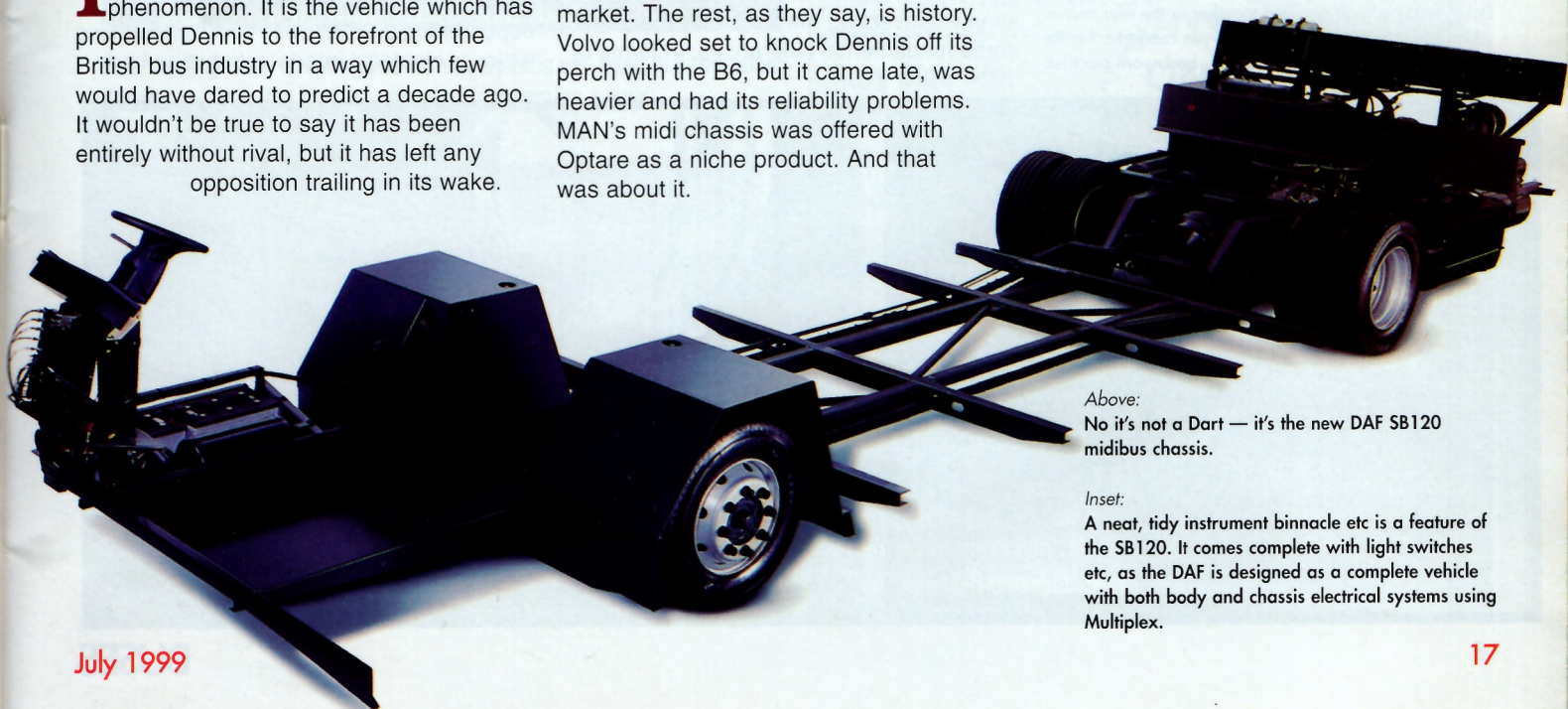
What has been the secret of the Dart's success? It was developed at a time when the British bus industry was in the doldrums. Deregulation had thrown the operating industry into turmoil, privatisation at the same time left operators using all available capital to mount buyouts and to guard themselves against opportunist competitors taking advantage of their instability as they found their feet in a new regime. And the country was in recession.

This meant that if operators were going to buy buses, they wanted low-cost ones. And the big European builders were not interested in this low-volume, low-value business when they could still sell expensive, heavyweight products to a more appreciative market on the Continent.

The Dart was, it has to be said, a visionary product, produced by a manufacturer trading largely in the British market and thus able to tailor its new product entirely for the needs of that market. The rest, as they say, is history. Volvo looked set to knock Dennis off its perch with the B6, but it came late, was heavier and had its reliability problems. MAN's midi chassis was offered with Optare as a niche product. And that was about it.

Changing circumstances

The Dart has been a product for the 1990s, and has sold consistently throughout the decade. Early successes were as a minibus with big-bus attributes for London; now it's a small urban bus, it's a medium sized bus, it's even a big bus, it's an urban bus, it's a rural bus — even an interurban bus. It seems unstoppable. But other manufacturers are now realising they are missing out on the British market. It's become a strong market, the second biggest in Europe, and other builders want a share of the action. Long-established players like DAF and Scania are presenting a more serious challenge to the market leaders, while Mercedes-Benz and MAN are trying to crack it too.



Above:
No it's not a Dart — it's the new DAF SB120 midibus chassis.

Inset:
A neat, tidy instrument binnacle etc is a feature of the SB120. It comes complete with light switches etc, as the DAF is designed as a complete vehicle with both body and chassis electrical systems using Multiplex.

DAF's growth has been remarkable. It is now No3 in the market, and whereas Scania is carving out much of its growth in coaches DAF's growth has been in buses, having got in first with a low-floor double-decker and getting on quietly with its low-floor SB220 single-decker, now available with Ikarus and East Lancs bodywork as well as Plaxton. It helps having its UK importer, Arriva Bus & Coach, associated with one of the main bus operating groups. As a result the UK accounts for 30% of DAF Bus's output; DAF, not surprisingly, regards the UK as a core market.

But with the midibus sector accounting for well in excess of 1,000 vehicles per year DAF, like other builders, has been short of a suitable product. This has not only left it in the cold for a significant part of its potential UK business, but has meant that its importer has had to offer a rival manufacturer's product to supply the needs of its operating colleagues and also for its large rental business. Thus DAF Bus, recognising the importance of the British market to its business and the importance of having a suitable product for Arriva to offer, decided to go ahead and produce a new midibus product aimed specifically at the British market. It has now been announced as the SB120.

A Dart clone?

An initial glance at the DAF SB120 might give you the impression that it is a clone of the Dennis Dart. It is a low-floor chassis, with an entirely flat profile from the front to the riser ahead of the rear axle. Like the Dart it uses slender chassis members and has a very simple, clean appearance. The main differences in appearance are that there is diagonal bracing between the cross members inside the side members, and that the wheelarch structure, in typical DAF

fashion, forms part of the chassis, complete with the gangway between them.

Overall lengths of the SB120 are similar to the main members of the Dart range; chassis lengths are 9m, 9.85m and 10.5m, which are expected to create complete vehicles of about 0.2m over those lengths. Like the Dart, front and rear overhangs remain constant (2.083m and 2.58m respectively) with wheelbases of 4.3m, 5.2m and 5.8m, giving very similar proportions to its British rival. Wheelbases for comparable Darts are 4.4m, 5.2m and 5.8m respectively, with front and rear overhangs of 2.05m and 2.56m respectively.

The sense of a Dart clone is heightened when you look at the driveline. At the rear of the chassis is an in-line six-cylinder Cummins B-series 130bhp engine, driving straight into an Allison AT545 automatic gearbox, with a short prop shaft into an axle-mounted Telma retarder and a single-reduction Dana rear axle. It all looks — indeed is — remarkably familiar. Also familiar from the Dart are the 19.5in wheels. In truth there is probably little other choice; the driveline is entirely proven, it is familiar to bus operators — anything else would immediately be a turn-off to much of the market — and the small wheels make a low-floor midibus viable.

One of DAF Bus's stated aims is to achieve maximum commonality of parts for operators. This is a laudable aim — but usually manufacturers aim for commonality within their *own* range, not with their main rival! The truth is, of course, Arriva fleets have large quantities of Darts and if they are to change supplier will want to do so with minimum disruption. Not that the SB120 is aimed solely at Arriva; indeed other operators have been involved in the consultation process to which DAF has subjected its new model.

Unique selling points

There would seem to be little point in DAF simply reinventing the Dart, and there are some fundamental differences. In terms of

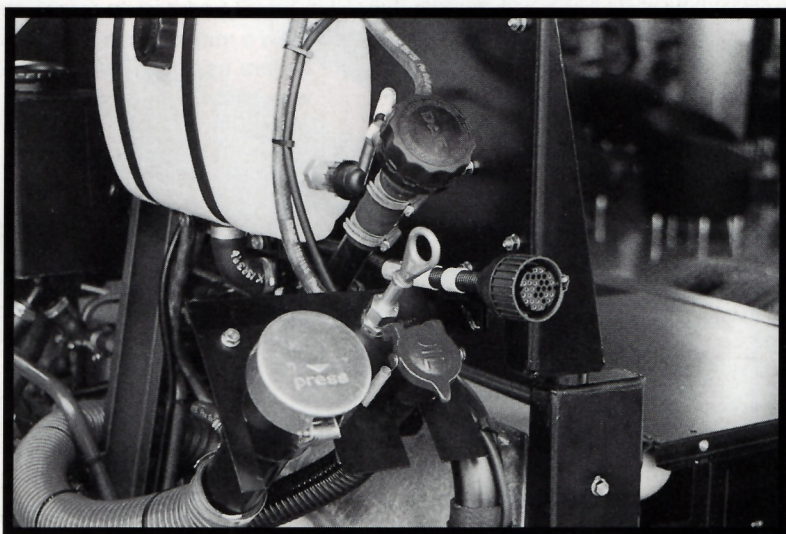
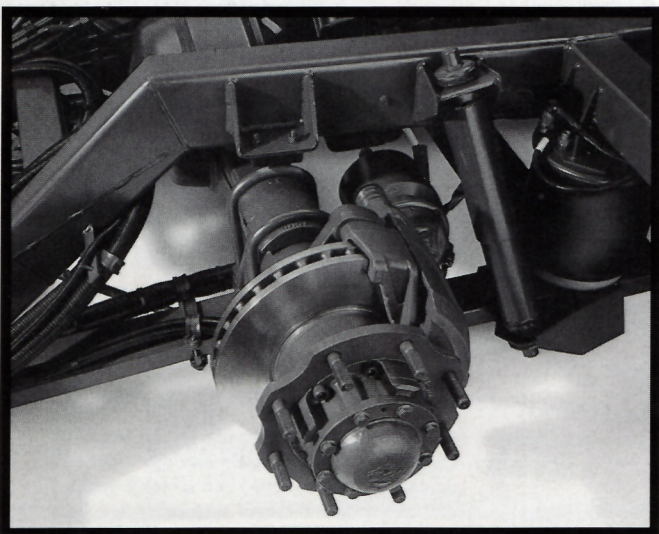
its specification there are three significant ones. The first is that it features disc brakes all round. These are intended to give greater stopping power than is possible with drums within the 19.5in wheels, and allow for a greater steering lock angle of 54° than is possible with drums. This enables DAF to claim a tighter steering angle than the Dart, though in reality only by a whisker: even with its drum brakes the Dart achieves 53°.

Secondly, the DAF is designed to support Multiplex wiring. Multiplex is already used by Optare on the Solo and by Marshall — though it's not as new a concept as all that, as Leyland was working on it for the Leyland National — and uses electrical impulses to send signals to remote control units rather than every electrical component having its own separate wiring. All chassis electrical components are worked by Multiplex (using a system provided by Actia), and body functions will be incorporated into it too. Thus the chassis comes with its own specially-designed instrument panel, complete with switches for interior lighting, vehicle lighting etc. This is a new departure for DAF Bus, and the same technology will be applied to all new models in future.

This naturally involves close co-operation with the bodybuilder, and another area in which the SB120 differs from the Dart is that it is to be bodied by just one bodybuilder, initially at least. Though DAF Bus is not yet prepared to reveal the chosen bodybuilder, the SB120 has been conceived as a complete vehicle and has been developed in close consultation with the bodybuilder. This, DAF considers, is essential with a low-floor vehicle, and indeed regards its 'chassis' as an underframe. Certainly the level of co-operation with a bodybuilder has to be greater with low-floor vehicles, as the more slender chassis members which are essential for a low-floor bus mean that more stresses have to be absorbed by the body. At the same time increasing dependence on electronic systems requires a closer electrical interface between body

Below:
The DAF SB120 has disc brakes all round.

Below right:
Daily checks are all grouped together in the rear corner. Alongside the dipstick is the multi-pin connector for the bodywork electrics.



and chassis. The way this will work on the DAF is particularly impressive, with a single multipin socket ready and waiting on the chassis for the bodybuilder to plug the body electrics straight in.

Then the SB120 has wide-track axles and is designed to be bodied up to 2.55m wide, with a minimum of 2.5m. The chosen bodybuilder will apparently build it to 2.5m. A similar approach has been taken with the Volvo B6BLE; the wider track improves ride quality and prevents the effect of wheels disappearing inside the bodywork when

bodied to full width. Thus in this class the Dart remains the only vehicle capable of being bodied to 2.4m. The front axle on the SB120, a deep-drop beam axle, has been produced specially for it by Dana.

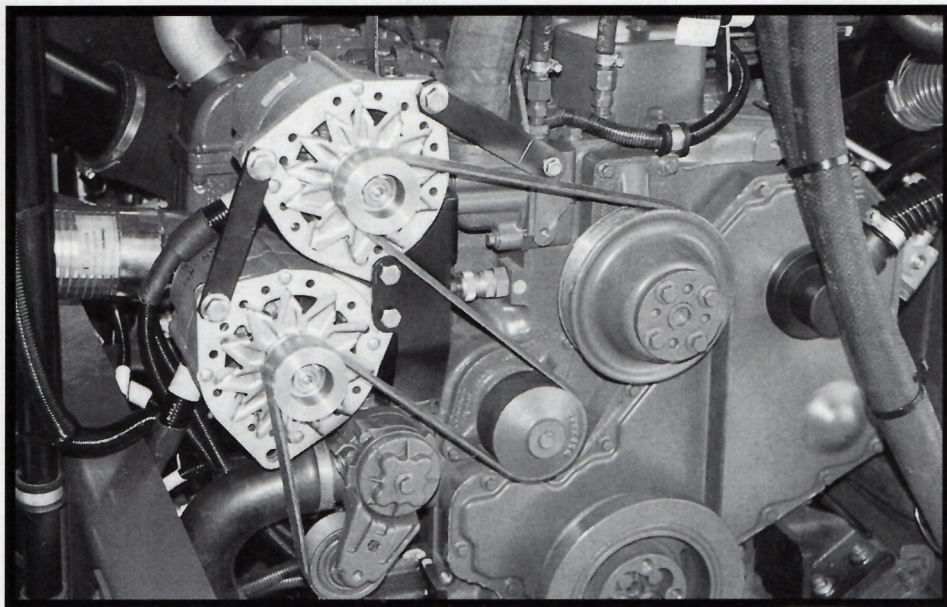
The SB120 is designed for seating capacities up to 42 — plus 14 standing — with 25 seats at the low level. In dual door form it can have a flat floor and two steps up at the rear — giving a step-free exit — and the chassis is designed to accept a wheelchair ramp at the rear door. It can also kneel on both axles, bringing both

entrance and exit height down to 250mm, from a standard 320mm. Width through the front wheelarches is 925mm, slightly narrower than the Dennis's 942mm.

Midi competition

Recently the midibus sector has been almost a one-horse race. None of the alternatives have come close to meeting the runaway success of the Dart, even if the Volvo B6 came close soon after its introduction before tailing off into the background. The latest version of the B6 appears to be a major improvement, and gives a heavier alternative to the Dart. However there can seldom have been such direct head-on competition in the bus world between two rival models as there is soon to be with the DAF and the Dennis. Nothing has been said about pricing, but it seems a fair bet that DAF Bus will make sure it is keenly priced in relation to the Dennis. Except where shorter or longer lengths than those offered by Dennis are needed, almost certainly the DAF will be specified by Arriva companies in place of the Dennis.

Other operators now have a genuine choice of midibus supplier — even if the choice of goods looks remarkably similar!



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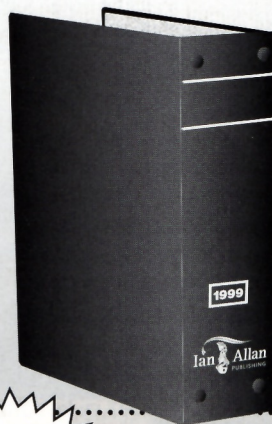
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Buses Profile WRIGHT

GAVIN BOOTH takes a look at the bus bodybuilder which has grown from almost nothing to being a major market player during the course of the 1990s

It took guts to break into the UK bus bodybuilding market at a time when orders were still depressed by the aftermath of deregulation and privatisation, but Robert Wright & Son of Ballymena succeeded and has gone on to become widely accepted as one of the country's mainstream suppliers, through its pioneering low-floor single-deck buses and its willingness to listen to its customers.

Overnight success?

Like many overnight successes, the Wright business has been around for a long time — since 1946 in fact. At this time it was a jobbing coachbuilder, turning its hand to conversions and bodies of all types, and by 1960 it had become Northern Ireland's premier commercial bodybuilder, producing library vans, tipping lorries and mobile shops. Then in 1978 it became the first UK bodybuilder to adopt the Alusuisse bolted aluminium construction system, and from that time it became increasingly involved in bus building. Now Wright has moved on to its own bolted aluminium construction system.

British operators have only become used to Wright bodies in the 1990s, and since 1990 the output has grown from three to 15 buses a week and financial turnover has more than trebled over the same period. In

that time Wright has become a major supplier to groups like FirstGroup, Go-Ahead and National Express and its products have become familiar throughout the British Isles.

The pace of growth has meant that the company has had to restructure its Ballymena factory to take account of the increased throughput of bodies, and while the inherited production line system may not appear the most logical, a vast building extension programme is in progress which will result in smoother progress through the building. A new finishing shop with two paint spray booths is already in use, and this has already eased the pressure.

The latest phase of the building improvements has cost £2.2m, but developments already in hand will increase flexibility. There will be more lines, moving at slower speeds, which will allow the company to build to customer specification. Already there has been a 20% reduction in build times over the past two years, and although the 1999 throughput is expected to be more than 600 bodies, there will be capacity to build 700.

The first thing that strikes you at Ballymena is the sheer busy-ness of the place. Coachbuilding is a labour-intensive process, and while there are many

employees on the shopfloor, you are left with the feeling that everybody is doing something productive. There is, it appears, a genuine commitment among all staff to what the company is doing, helped by the company's desire to keep all staff fully in the picture about current and future developments. A glance at any of the company notice-boards spread throughout the complex confirms this.

Senior managers at Wright constantly refer to the company ethos and you quickly realise that this is not a list of convenient platitudes they merely pay lip-service to, but a genuine approach to working relationships. The ethos is strong on partnerships, on integrity, on pride, on treating people as you would wish to be treated and on promising to listen and respond to people's needs. Anyone with any first-hand experience of business today will know that these principles are often ignored in the pursuit of profit, so the Wright approach comes as a breath of fresh air. The Wrights are a Christian family, and many of the people I spoke to referred to the importance of sticking to Christian principles, not something you often hear in the bus industry.





Successful design

Much of Wright's success can be laid at the door of Trevor Erskine, the company's legendary design director. Trevor, 22 years at Ballymena after a distinguished career in the automotive and aircraft industries, describes himself as a transport designer, interested in all aspects of design. When he joined Wright it was producing ash-framed, aluminium-panelled bodies with glassfibre fronts, which were hand-crafted and unsuitable for large-scale production.

'We needed to find a speciality,' he says. 'We tried lots of different things and then we found Alusuisse. That got us started, but much of what we were doing was square and utilitarian, often for export. We thought we should develop a luxury coach body, and worked with General Motors to develop the Contour on Bedford chassis. It was sold by Bedford, but we didn't know that Bedford was on the way out at the time.'

The Contour was ahead of its time with bold, stylish looks, and helped bring the Wright name to the attention of many operators. The next big step was the Endeavour coach for Ulsterbus, which led to the Wright 'look' that is familiar today, with that big double-curvature windscreen.

Trevor Erskine is clearly a transport enthusiast, recalling fondly the thrill of travelling from Belfast to Dublin on a steam train, and the excitement of wondering if the engine would be red or blue. 'Buses must be attractive,' he says. 'I want

passengers to get the same thrill from them as I did when I travelled on those stream trains, or when you board Concorde. Travel should be an emotional experience.'

The first Wright body to make an impact in Britain was the Handybus, built from 1990, mainly on Dennis Dart chassis and mainly for use in London; the retro look of the flat front end caused a few comments at the time, but the buses have proved to be well-built and durable. The next step was the Endurance, recognisably from the same family as current designs, and this was first built on Scania K92, and subsequently on Mercedes-Benz O.405, Scania N113CRB and Volvo B10B. A significant customer for the Endurance was Grampian, the start of a long relationship which is reflected in today's substantial rolling order for FirstGroup fleets.

The big breakthrough was probably the contract to build the first batch of low-floor single-deckers to be bodied in Britain, the Dennis Lance SLF and Scania N113CRL vehicles with Pathfinder bodies supplied to London Buses in 1993/94 at a time when other major manufacturers were still insisting that the high price of low-floor buses would kill off the concept.

Those first buses were marketed as premium products, and the costly development work that went into them helped the company to pioneer further low-floor concepts, like the Axxess-ultralow, developed jointly with Scania and using the L113CRL chassis. With this model, Wright's designers have modified the chassis to give

a better low-floor entrance and gangway, and Trevor Erskine's team went on to develop the Flioline floor system which adds structural strength and also accommodates a gently inclined floor. This first appeared in 1997 on the Renown, on Volvo B10BLE chassis, and then on the Axxess Flioline, on Scania L94UB.

It has been Wright policy to give separate names to outwardly similar bodies on different chassis, so in addition to the models detailed above there is the Liberator, on Volvo B10L, and the Urbanranger, on Mercedes-Benz OH1416.

A new low-floor midibus body with a strong family resemblance to full-size bodies was launched in 1995, the Crusader on Volvo B6LE and later on Dennis Dart SLF. Now there is the impressive Crusader 2 supermidi on Volvo's new B6BLE, for which Wright is the lead bodybuilder.

Opposite:

A FirstGroup Scania Axxess Flioline/L94UB stands outside Wright's factory in Ballymena.
GAVIN BOOTH

Inset:

Jeff Wright, Wright's managing director.
GAVIN BOOTH

Above:

A FirstGroup Volvo B10BLE/Renown in Wright's new finishing shop.
GAVIN BOOTH

The most dramatic Wright body is the Fusion, the UK's first low-floor articulated bus. Developed initially for FirstGroup on Volvo B10LA chassis, a batch of 40 of these impressive buses was going through the Ballymena factory at the time of my visit, and will be followed by 20 artics for the same customer on the new B7LA model, possibly with the new-style body. At present Wright is the only UK builder bodying the B10LA and B7LA artics, the B6BLE and the Scania L113.

A changing face

Notably missing from the Wright range is a double-deck body, and no doubt the company would develop one if a substantial order came along, which would cause a degree of nervousness at Blackburn, Falkirk, Leeds and Wigan. Jeff Wright, the company's managing director, is not convinced about double-deckers. 'We hope customers will realise from their end that there are not enough seats on the lower deck of a low-floor double-decker,' he says. 'We want to build buses that are accessible to everybody, and the double-decker is not the product to get people out of their cars. That's why we've taken the artic route, and we believe that the bus industry needs something unique and exciting like the artic to get people out of their cars. The artic is a good, accessible mass transit vehicle which can replace the double-deck.'

Jeff Wright has taken over the reins and with his father, William, has successfully brought the company through its years of dramatic growth. 'Our growth has been difficult to manage,' Jeff admits, 'but our company structure is changing and we're breaking down the barriers between departments. We've come from 180 to 500 staff in the past three or four years, and we have developed an enviable reputation for meeting and beating customers' delivery deadlines. In fact we have turned business down rather than let them down, which can be painful.'

'At one time 80% of our output was for London, then we realigned our business and became recognised by

the big groups. We knew that if we didn't grow we wouldn't get the business.' At the same time, Wright is keeping a careful eye on developments in the operating and manufacturing industries. It recognises the dangers of having a small number of large customers, given the ever-changing structure of the industry, but will not compromise on price and quality to win business from giants like Stagecoach, significantly absent from the customer list.

FirstGroup is an important customer and, says Jeff Wright, it was 'a strategic decision to align with a company that had the same view and vision as we had.'

Although Wright decided to line up with Scania and Volvo, who between them supply the majority of chassis passing through the coachworks, it shies clear of an alliance with a chassis builder, and reckons it could turn to other products if industry mergers reduced the chassis choice.

Some time ago Wright released details of a low-floor minibus, which was to be developed with Mercedes-Benz, but that project has been stillborn. 'We saw an opportunity to get into this market segment and worked on a design for a year,' says Jeff Wright. 'We were disappointed that it didn't come to fruition.' He doesn't rule out a return to this sector, but with a bulging order book, of which roughly three-quarters are 12m citybuses, this may not happen for some time.

Jeff Wright himself went through a two-year shopfloor apprenticeship, followed by a two-year diploma in production engineering, so he has a good grasp of the business and its potential. He also recognises the importance of Wright to the local economy. 'We're here for 500 local families,' he says. 'Ballymena is an area of low unemployment and a good work ethic, and that helps us to sustain growth because of good people.' Jeff's sister, Mandy Knowles, is personnel director, a recent appointment that reflects the growth of the family firm. She is involved

in setting up training for staff at all levels, and the company offers a four-year apprenticeship programme with around 40 youngsters joining each year.

'We adopt a paternal attitude to our staff,' says Mandy Knowles. 'My door, like Jeff's, is always open, and we talk to staff about social problems, like drug-taking. When any of our staff have difficulties, we are there to help them out.' Staff turnover, perhaps not surprisingly, is low.

Jack Kernohan, sales director, is a long-term Wright's man, moving up from the workshop floor, so he can talk realistically to customers and won't make rash promises. 'We're a listening company,' he says, 'and we recognise that you must take the customer with you. Bus operators don't want to hear about our headaches.'

He recalls the days when the response to a sales call from Wright's was 'Who?'. 'We sell on the quality of the product,' he says, recalling the difficulties he faced at one time selling the idea of buses built in Northern Ireland, where the image of the province created by the media did a great deal of damage to local businesses.

Customcare

Where some bodybuilders fall down is the quality of their after-sales service, and Wright has tackled this area head-on with its recently-launched Customcare system. 'If we build the best bus in the UK, we should have the guts to support it,' says Mark Nodder, Wright's commercial director. Customcare has been in development for some time now, but the company wanted to wait until it was properly proved before it was launched. The new Customcare division has a team of 11 staff to provide a total after-sales support package, helping customers to keep their vehicles on the road and providing parts. A network of Customcare centres has been established,



A free training package is offered to customers when they buy a bus; they come to Ballymena and are given classroom and shopfloor training. Customers receive a set of manuals covering parts, driving, service and maintenance, and the most common repairs.

Other features Customcare — whose logo is carried on the overalls of all shopfloor staff as a reminder that care for the customer includes build quality — include a bonded glazing replacement kit. When a replacement window is bought for the bus, a complete kit of specially-formulated bonding materials and instructions is provided. The bonding materials are formulated such that when combined in the correct proportions they can cure in a space of two hours (five hours for the strength required for double glazing), rather than the 24 hours usually needed. These chemicals are expensive and have a short shelf life, so by providing just the quantity needed for one window at the time it is required, the kit remains affordable, there is no waste and the job can be done properly.

As part of its commitment to customers Wright has also developed a kinder bus wash solution and is offering it as a branded product, ReGener8. This has a neutral pH balance, ensuring that paintwork

lasts longer and reducing the possible toxic effects on the local environment. Wright also runs a programme to ensure that corrosion protection on vehicles is renewed at the appropriate time.

The future looks rosy for

Wright. It has substantial orders in hand including Crusader 2s on Volvo B6BLE for Dublin Bus (20) and FirstGroup (40); Renowns on Volvo B10BLE for Keighley & District (12), Oxford Bus (15), FirstGroup (75) and Translink (90 divided equally between Citybus and Ulsterbus); Liberators on Volvo B10L for Bus Eireann (10); and Axxess Fjolines on Scania L94UB for Apcoa (12 for airport car park use) and FirstGroup (75).

Then there is the new range of bodies to be unveiled at the Coach & Bus Show, which will introduce a new, softer look, and bodies on a new mid-size chassis for the UK market. And there is always the export market. Wright has dabbled in this — it has supplied Dart SLFs to Australia — but sees potential though its new division, Expotech.

Looking to the future, Jeff Wright doesn't believe that the future for buses is



necessarily diesel. 'We're very interested in alternative drive technology and we have a development team looking at this area'.

Wright has built up an enviable reputation for design innovation and build quality, and a desire to listen to its customers and give them what they want. Jeff Wright sums it up: 'We must continue to be good and innovative and convince our customers that that's what they want and need.'

Opposite:

A recent delivery to Bus Eireann is this Wright Liberator-bodied Volvo B10L.

STEPHEN MORRIS

Above:

A FirstGroup Fusion/B10LA in the new paintshop.

GAVIN BOOTH

July 1999

SOUTHEND'S ROLLER COASTER RIDE BY BUS



RICHARD DELAHOY charts the turbulent history of a former municipal's highs and lows since 1986



Above:
Arriva Southend still has 28 former Southend Transport Fleetlines. 234 (MRJ 234W) passes a former trolleybus standard at Southchurch.
PICTURES BY THE AUTHOR

Right:
Southend introduced minibuses using Optare CityPacers in 1987/88 to see off competition from taxibus operators. They proved short lived. No402 (E402 BHK) works a Sunday service 64.



Below:
A dozen Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointers from a batch being delivered to London & Country came to Southend to replace Leyland Nationals in 1997.



The Big Bang

Thirty years of stability, when familiarity helped compensate for relatively high fares and unimaginative services, ended with a bang on 26 October 1986 when Britain's buses were deregulated. Fear of the competition authorities' disapproval hastened the end of a 1955 co-ordination agreement that gave Eastern National 67% of the mileage within a 96 square mile area to Southend Transport's 33%. To begin with the bang was more muted than big, as both operators carried on largely as before, with a few routes swapped between them.

Southend Transport became an arms' length limited company, but was still owned by the council and the buses retained their familiar blue and cream livery with the borough crest on the sides. It did have a new man at the top, as Ian Trevette had moved from Cardiff City Transport to become the company's first managing director, but he was supported by long-serving traffic superintendent Derrick Giles — 'Mr Southend Transport' to many people inside and outside the undertaking — with the new title of operations director.

A high level of commercial mileage was registered, including evening and Sunday operations, and mileage was expanded early in 1987 by turning some extremely marginal Essex County Council tendered operations into commercial routes. Some short-lived tendering successes also took buses outside their traditional area. A welcome change, from December 1986, was the abolition of the no-change farebox policy on driver-only buses, with change being given from December 1986. Crew operation also continued on routes 1 and 3A until June 1987. A £2.60 day rover local ticket was introduced. Fares later dropped dramatically in the ensuing bus war and even now an off-peak rover costs £2.20, with wider availability.

But trouble was building up in October 1986, as the first of a series of private taxi bus services took to the road, using six and eight-seat Volkswagens. TV Taxis, and a similar operation by Southend Radio Cars which started in November 1987, became a serious thorn in the sides of both Southend Transport and Eastern National, until Southend retaliated by matching some of the taxi bus operators' tactics.

The first Routemaster - and minibuses

Ex-London Routemaster RM1571 was hired from a preservationist early in 1987. It created considerable interest, but its tatty appearance hardly presented a good image for the company. It achieved that with its first minibuses since the late-1940s.

These were six Optare CityPacers which also introduced a new livery blue, red and white livery with 'Sprite' branding. They started a new route along some narrow residential roads in Westcliff, and also operated on other lightly-used routes. There were no plans yet for high-frequency conversions of existing routes. The new livery and a more prominent Southend Transport fleetname introduced across the fleet between the autumn of 1988 and spring 1990, but the Sprite branding was dropped when the CityPacers were withdrawn.

Despite the cosmetic changes, a major crisis was fast overtaking the company. Substantial

losses on the coach operations (including the London sightseeing operation, Culturebus, purchased in April 1987) and in the engineering function were compounded by the taxi bus competition and the continued operation of some seriously unremunerative mileage. My all time low was to carry only five passengers in an entire five-hour part time shift on the 24 route. In its first five months of trading, the company lost £99,000 and was to report a staggering £601,000 loss over the next 12 months.

With the company facing bankruptcy, the council was compelled to call in the company's auditors, Pannell Kerr Forster, to undertake an urgent review. Culturebus operation ceased immediately, coach operations were scaled back dramatically and the managing director, engineering director and operations director all left. Some unsolicited approaches were made to buy the company, but the council decided to persevere, providing substantial loans to keep the company afloat. A new traffic and operations director, Mark Howarth, joined from United Transport in South Africa, while finance director David Shlackman became managing director.

Recovery plan — and more RMs

Southend Transport had already begun to fight back against the taxi buses, using unscheduled duplicates to match their pirate tactics, and Wayfarer ticket machines had been introduced to provide instant management information on revenue. Mark Howarth added new staff uniforms and customer care training, and new destination blinds were introduced. But few people were prepared for his masterstroke — a return to crew operation with 12 Routemasters.

1988. It won the resulting Essex County Council tender and the three J-registered open-top Fleetlines appeared in a special version of the new livery and were named, but this was to be their last season on Southend seafront. Subsequently two P-registered Fleetlines were converted but Southend never again ran a commercial open-top seafront bus service.

The Routemasters, with their *Pride of . . .* names, were an immediate success with passengers. Perhaps less popular was a service revision in October when every route was altered. The aim of that revision, a simplified, high frequency network, was laudable. Regrettably, it was just the first of a series of major upheavals that have continued right up to date and which have seriously damaged public confidence in the network. Major service changes have since taken place on average more than once a year.

Nationals galore

Further variety was introduced in March 1989 when some former London Country Mark 1 Leyland Nationals arrived. It wasn't long before there were 33 similar buses, all 10.3m long. They did nothing to improve the dismal age profile of the fleet (11.1 years at the end of 1988), but a solitary new 13ft 9in high Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympian was acquired from dealer stock and was joined by Nottingham's two full-height experimental Northern Counties-bodied Olympians. Ironically, all three Olympians were withdrawn after short service, as they were too high for a fleet with a strategically-placed 13ft 8in bridge in town.

More RMs — full height, of course — joined



RMs took over daytime operation of the 29 in September 1988 and soon spread to trunk routes 1 and 3A. Initially, they ran alongside 10 ex-London DMS Fleetlines, but these were withdrawn by the end of the year.

Meanwhile, local tradition was challenged when financial constraints prompted the company not to register its seafront service in

Southend Routemaster 102, former RM172, which was the staff's showbus, works a Canvey service on a damp January evening in 1989.



the fleet between 1989 and 1992 to give a final operational total of 23, including former Green Line coach RCL2256 with its unique standard RM rear end, acquired after sustaining accident damage in London. The CityPacers had suffered overheating and gearbox troubles and were withdrawn in the summer of 1989, replaced mainly by Leyland Nationals, with just two ex-demonstration Carlyle-bodied Ivecos being used for the residual small bus requirement until they, too, were withdrawn in 1992.

With an improved financial position, thoughts had turned to fleet replacement and demonstrators were examined, including a Scania N112, MCW Metrobus, Dennis Javelin and Darts, a CVE Omni and a Mercedes 811D. In the event, four Leyland-bodied Olympians were bought; today, it's the standard double-decker, with examples bought new and secondhand, but a lot of troubled water would flow under Southend's bridges before they arrived.

War looms

Southend Transport's more aggressive stance woke up Eastern National. Major service changes in November 1989 signalled the start of a response. Then it was split up in July 1990, following Badgerline's acquisition of the business from its ex-National Bus Company management,

and Thamesway took over the south Essex operations. This new company set about converting most of its Southend town services to high frequency minibus operations in January 1991, using brand new Mercedes minibuses and cascaded Badgerline Ford Transits. Southend retaliated, adding 26 vehicles to its fleet in February and March. It also mirrored Thamesway's Southend operations, and expanded into Basildon and Billericay. Both operators slashed fares, but the first casualty of the war was TV Taxis which went into liquidation in April. The process continued through 1991 and 1992.

Southend found a new source of secondhand double-deckers, following its last two Routemasters with the first of 20 ECW-bodied Bristol VRs, including four highbridge ex-Ribble examples. Some ran for a while in their former owners' colours with only the fronts and (sometimes) rears in fleet colours — a far cry from the well turned out fleet in more stable times. By June 1992, Southend's fleet included 115 buses, an all-time record, operating over 100,000 miles a week. There were 23 RMs, 31 Fleetlines, nine Olympians, 17 VRs, 33 Nationals, two open-top Fleetlines and 17 coaches. Also to be found in the garage were two half-cab double-deckers, both fortunately still with us in 1999. Former

Southend PD3 334 was hired



from a preservationist as a driver trainer, and ex-Morecambe 1949 Regent III open topper KTF 594 was bought for promotional purposes.

Deeply concerned about Thamesway's fare cuts, and the introduction of a competing London coach service, Southend lodged a formal complaint with the Office of Fair Trading. The subsequent investigation, which did not report until over a year later, in August 1993, cleared Thamesway of the allegations of predatory action.

Changing hands

After returning to low margin profitability, Southend Transport started making substantial losses again. At the worst extreme, the company lost £121,453 in one dreadful four-week period, in August 1992. Such massive losses could not be sustained and the council put the company up for sale in January 1993. A war of words followed in the local press when the Council refused to allow Badgerline to bid, fearing the consequences of a near monopoly in the town.

Thirty-seven expressions of interest were whittled down to a shortlist of British Bus, Grampian, Luton & District, County Bus and a joint Southern Vectis/management bid. British Bus and Southern Vectis were admitted to a final shortlist, but the latter apparently failed to make the necessary presentation to the council. At a late stage in the negotiations, the council received a direct approach about a management/employee buy-out. This was rejected, with contemporary council minutes recording an intriguing entry: 'Resolved that no late bid be entertained from Southend Transport's Management, with or without support from Badgerline'. I doubt if we will ever know the full story of how Southend's biggest rivals might have teamed up with the management to buy the company.

The British Bus bid won through, but it was not as straightforward as generally understood. On 24 June 1993, Southend Transport was sold to Branksome 169, a company owned in equal shares by David Martin, Richard Stanley, Gordon Watt and Dawson Williams — all of them directors of British Bus. A few months later, Colchester Borough Transport was also bought by Branksome 169, which subsequently changed its name to East Coast Buses. Southend and Colchester had enjoyed close ties over the years and it was ironic that this was now to be formalised by having common ownership and management.

The purchase price for Southend Transport of around £800,000 was funded partly by the £100,000 capital put in by the shareholders but largely by mortgaging the London Road garage. In fact, the price was very low for a company with an asset base of £2.2 million, reflecting the continued losses. The new owners also took on the outstanding debt of the company, £860,000, but repaid this in the next few months by selling the engineering works back to the council and by using the company's existing cash balances.

Ownership of Branksome 169 was transferred in February 1994 to Broomco (728) Ltd, itself owned by four Channel Islands investment companies about which little is known publicly. Broomco (728) Ltd was later renamed Londonlinks Buses after its ownership passed to British Bus Group in May 1994. The turbulent history of British Bus was characterised by many such changes of corporate structure and ownership, and Southend then found itself as a

BUSES

subsidiary of London & Country from January 1995. It remains so today, despite the Cowie takeover of British Bus and the subsequent Arriva renaming, although Southend is now controlled by Arriva the Shires for management control purposes.

Another recovery plan

Mark Howarth left Southend in August 1992, to run Badgerline subsidiary Brewers, and was succeeded by Graeme Torrance from SMT. He took a fresh look at the operations, and instituted a 7% cut in mileage in 1993. The RMs were withdrawn, followed soon afterwards by the first of the Nationals and VRs. Following the sale of the company, common-sense prevailed on both sides, as the directors' report for the time states: 'both operators took individual decisions to revise services to eliminate wasteful duplication'. The service cuts signalled a truce, if not a complete outbreak of peace. Thamesway had registered further competitive services to mirror Southend's trunk 7/7A/8 Rayleigh routes from mid July 1993 but withdrew the registrations without starting the routes. Both Southend and Thamesway substantially cut back their more competitive operations from August, Southend for instance withdrawing the Billericay route altogether, in an overall 18% reduction in mileage. Competition to Basildon remained with both operators running slightly different half-hourly versions of service 2, a situation still current in 1999.

Further cost cutting came with the closure of the central engineering works at Tickfield Avenue late in 1993. More space was created in the London Road garage for repair work, with repaints taking place at Colchester and major engineering work now the responsibility of London & Country. Crew operation ended on 31 December 1993 marking the end of a fascinating five-year interlude. By January 1994, the fleet was down to 77 buses and 17 coaches. More minor competition emerged in the summer of 1993 when a Dotto land train appeared on a circular route over part of the seafront. Great surprise followed in 1994 when Southend bought two secondhand Dotto trains of its own; the private operator did not return, leaving the field open for Southend to operate them for two seasons.

London & Country influence

Four Wright-bodied Dennis Lance SLFs, part funded by Essex County Council, came at the end of 1994 as part of a county-wide low-floor demonstration project. Their Surrey registrations reflected the London & Country influence, later to be expanded when the buses were renumbered into the L&C series as LSL001-4. Prefix letters also appeared on subsequent deliveries, but have never been used in normal operations. Graeme Torrance returned north to head up Clydeside Buses and henceforth Southend was only to have a part time general manager, Steven Salmon overseeing Colchester as well as Southend.

A major upheaval in May 1996 saw a territorial review linked to a joint ticketing agreement with Thamesway. Thamesway ran its local services from a garage at Hadleigh, five miles west of Southend, yet operated through to the east side of the town, whilst Southend did the opposite by serving Canvey Island. Southend withdrew from Canvey and most of Benfleet, Thamesway ceased to serve Shoebury, and some routes

swapped sides again.

The principle behind the revisions was good but the execution was poor. In an attempt to retain as many travel opportunities as possible, there were many odd variations to routes, some otherwise straightforward services having three or four variations. Even the staff were confused, to the extent that my pensioner mother lost count of the number of service 28 drivers who had to ask her for directions when, as usual, she was the last remaining passenger on the bus after passing the Shoebury Asda store. Southend Transport's bus network required 40 separate route numbers, 18 of which were only used for single or occasional journeys. The problem was compounded by late production of timetable leaflets. Many further revisions — and confusions — have followed.

Opposite above:

745 (PJ1 3745) was a former Greater Glasgow Leyland National, GGE 170T, which was refurbished and fitted with a DAF engine.

Opposite below:

Not many buses carry Arriva Southend livery yet. 453 (R953 VPU) is a Mercedes Vario dismissed by County Bus, working a shuttle service in conjunction with Great Eastern Railway.

THE FINANCIAL ROLLERCOASTER (£000S):

Period end	Months	Revenue	Operating profit/(loss)
March 1985	12	4,393	35
March 1986	12	5,299	130
October 1986	7	3,094	n/a
March 1987	5	2,257	(99)
March 1988	12	5,455	(601)
March 1989	12	4,983	130
March 1990	12	5,219	128
March 1991	12	5,587	214
March 1992	12	6,971	251
March 1993	12	6,978	(365)
December 1993	9	5,013	212
December 1994	12	6,315	1,013
December 1995	12	6,221	969
December 1996	12	6,128	758
December 1997	12	6,230	837

(The December 1998 figures have not yet been made publicly available).

SOUTHEND'S FLUCTUATING FLEET SIZE

Date	Buses	Coaches	Total	Comments
October 1986	51	66	117	Start of deregulation
August 1987	57	70	127	Includes Culturebus
April 1988	58	36	94	Major coach cuts
April 1989	72	30	102	Expansion of bus services
September 1990	65	19	84	The smallest fleet size
April 1991	97	19	116	Bus war with Thamesway
June 1992	115	17	132	Peak size
June 1993	112	17	129	Sale to British Bus
January 1994	77	17	94	Retrenchment
May 1999	78	18	96	Today's fleet

BUS FLEET CONTRASTS — 1986 AND 1999:

OCTOBER 1986

Type	Number
Fleetline/NCME	39
Ex-LT DMS	8
Fleetline open top	3
Bristol REL/ECW	1
TOTAL	51

MARCH 1999

Type	Number
Fleetline/NCME	28
Volvo Olympian/NCME	5
Leyland Olympian/ECW	9
Leyland Olympian/Leyland	4
Leyland Olympian/Alexander	6
Lance SLF/Wrights	5
Dart SLF/Wrights	2
Dart SLF/Plaxton	12
Mercedes/Plaxton	5
Mercedes/Reeve Burgess	2
TOTAL	78

The 28 Fleetlines in the 1999 fleet were all also owned in 1986.

Decent profits - at last

The company returned to profit when the bus war ended and, at the end of 1995, the garage site was transferred to British Bus Properties, stripping out an asset then valued at £1.2 million and replacing it with an equivalent amount owed to Southend Transport by its parent company.

Subsequently the site has been sold to developers, on behalf of Sainsburys, and the bus operation is to move later this year to new premises on the former coal yard at Southend Victoria station. Here there will be open parking, with a 12-road maintenance shed, fuel and wash line and offices. Crew changes will no longer be possible outside the garage, necessitating the use of shuttle buses to and from the bus station, and hence higher operating costs. In fact, the garage move should have taken place early in 1998 but has been delayed by construction problems at the new site.

New buses - at last!

The somewhat troublesome Lances were followed by five excellent Volvo Olympians and then by 12 Plaxton-bodied Dart SLFs, part of an L&C order and painted in a brighter livery with more white and less blue. Minibuses reappeared in 1997 with three diverted L&C Plaxton-bodied Mercedes 711Ds. They were later joined by two Varios new to but unused by County Bus and three Marshall-bodied Iveco 59.14s, again ex-County Bus. The non-standard Ivecos have recently been swapped for a further Lance and two Reeve Burgess-bodied 709Ds. To complete the story, County Bus also provided two P-registered Dart SLF/Wrights in 1998, whilst six F-registered Olympians were transferred across from Guildford & West Surrey two years earlier. They are identical to the original Olympian and regularly operate under the offending low bridge at Hockley that inspired its sale to East Yorkshire when only 18 months old.

The Arriva livery had made its first appearance in January 1998 on Olympian 281, following some experiments with Cowie style stripes. The company formally changed its name to Arriva Southend in April 1998, the new corporate image spreading fairly slowly at first, repaints now being undertaken one at a time in the middle of the garage floor, surrounded by operational buses and coaches — a far cry from the purpose built spray booth at the former works.

As we approach the new century, many links with the former Southend Transport have been

erased. Most of the buildings have gone; five rather tired Tiger coaches and 28 Fleetlines well past their best maintain a connection with the pre-deregulation business and many buses retain a reasonably familiar livery and name, at least in the short term. The service network has still not settled and public confidence in the

does not run on any of these three days over the Christmas/New Year holiday.

With more effective marketing and a stable route network, passenger numbers and revenue must grow and the undertaking could regain its reputation as the pre-eminent bus operator in the area. Let us hope that Arriva Southend can rise to that challenge.

Part two next month will look at the fortunes of the coach operations.

Sources: as well as the usual reference sources, information has come from Council minutes and accounts, Companies House records, the report of the Office of Fair Trading and from discussions with senior management over the years. Some route and fleet changes have been omitted, due to space limitations. The author has driven part time for Southend and chairs its User Group, but is not involved in the company's management. Any errors of interpretation are of course solely his responsibility.



company's operations remains low.

A comprehensive network of routes is still offered, running a mileage of around 71,000 miles a week, including a significant level of commercial evening and Sunday operation on all the principal routes. Only the half-hourly service 2 to Basildon goes beyond Southend's traditional operating area but the company has clearly expanded its bus presence since deregulation, running 50% more buses than in 1986. Both Southend Borough Council and Essex County provide limited *de minimis* subsidies but Southend no longer operates any tendered routes as such. Commendably, services operate 365 days a year. The Christmas Day operation is a sole return journey to London on coach service X2 (which calls at all stops on this day), whilst Boxing Day sees a skeleton daytime service on the main routes. On 1 January, a full Sunday service is provided, in stark contrast to neighbour Thamesway which

Top:
Bristol VRTs were pressed into service in 1991/92 in the light of competition from Thamesway. 402 (LHG 441T) was one of four highbridge ones, showing its Ribble origins on a service mirroring one of Thamesway's busiest routes.

Above:
Southend deregistered its long-standing seafar service in the light of financial losses in 1988.

NEW IN MALTA

JOHN G. LIDSTONE has recently visited Malta and finds it is getting no less interesting . . .



Above:
London Transport AEC Swifts still emerge in Malta. Former SMS244 (EGN 244J) has been rebuilt over a five-year period and has re-entered service on Malta as DBY 305. It now has an AEC 505 engine and manual gearbox.

Remember the way Malta was making the move to European-style low-floor buses? The project has still not got beyond six prototypes (two Optare Excels and four Dennis Darts, two each with Plaxton and East Lincs bodywork), and the ingenuity for which Maltese operators are renowned in rebuilding, recycling and creating 'new' buses from most unlikely parts, continues.

Below:

Despite the soft trim, new lighting etc there is no mistaking DBY 305's origins as an LT Swift, even if it does now have a flat, high floor!



Below:

The newest bus on Malta is DBY 330, which was finished by Marco Pulo (standing in front of the bus) in January. The chassis comprises parts from a Ford Cargo chassis, with a Perkins engine and Commer gearbox with air-operated splitter, while the body was built up from Scarnif parts — though that remarkable windscreen is actually two Plaxton side glasses turned on their sides! This stylish 45-seat bus is a Ramco — an anagram of Marco, who works full-time in the electricity industry and drives his bus at weekends and in the evenings.



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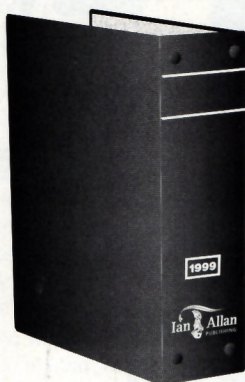
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Height

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Occupation

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Religion

Separated ☐

Build

Attractiveness

Slight ☐

V. Attractive ☐

Medium ☐

Attractive ☐

Large ☐

Average ☐

Affectionate ☐

Fashionable ☐

Serious ☐

Practical ☐

Considerate ☐

Conventional ☐

Shy ☐

Reliable ☐

Romantic ☐

Adventurous ☐

Your Interests

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Jazz/Folk music ☐

Pubs ☐

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Send your completed questionnaire to: Dateline 25 Abingdon Road London W8 6AL

PICTURE

ARTICS

ROLL INTO SERVICE

Whatever else 1999 brings, it will be remembered in the British bus world for being the year of the articulated bus. Three major operators have put artics into service in recent weeks — whether this is part of a growing trend for high-capacity people movers or whether it's just a good — if expensive — marketing ploy remains to be seen.

Opposite:

As reported last month Travel West Midlands has placed its 11 Mercedes-Benz O.405GNs into service. 6004 (T604 MOA) works the 67 Tyburn Road service to Castle Vale.

CHRIS MORRISON

Right:

Stagecoach's deliveries of artics this year have Jonckheere Modulo bodywork on Volvo B10ML chassis. Western 192 (T640 KCS) is seen at Kilmarnock on 16 May.

DAVID FULTON

Below right:

One of First Manchester's 15 Wright Fusion-bodied Volvo B10LAs, 2010 (T510 JNA) at Bury Interchange on the 135 to Manchester.

PHILIP LAMB



VIEW



Reviews

BOOKS

LONDON'S CLASSIC BUSES

**JOHN A. GRAY. CAPITAL TRANSPORT 96pp
£16.95**

You might forgive a weary reviewer for thinking, 'Oh dear, not another London colour album!'. But it has to be said, this one's a cracker! You might have to overlook hints of perhaps the very slightest rosy shade to John Gray's spectacles; an accomplished London bus author, he makes up for it with well-researched captions and a superb choice of colour photos. This is an all-colour book of RTs and Routemasters (the author forgets himself and one point and counts the FRM as a classic bus). What is particularly pleasing is the balance of pictures timewise; it would be easy to fill a book with colour pictures of 1990s Routemasters; these have their place here, but no more so than pictures taken in the 1950s — some in the quite early-1950s too.

Capital Transport has a justly-deserved name for quality, and maybe two fairly early postwar pictures at the beginning of the book were used small to avoid compromising quality. One at least looks as if it would have worked OK at a greater enlargement. But there's a wonderful 1955 picture of RTs stuck in traffic spread over one and a half pages to make up for it — and carefully arranged so that the book's stitching does not ruin the picture. The book follows its subject chronologically, and you find yourself frequently being overcome by waves of nostalgia, with the possible exception of the two spreads of overall advertising liveries on Routemasters. They're well depicted, but possibly best forgotten! Nearly all the pictures sparkle, quite a few have interesting background details and there are plenty of super pictures of country buses, in varying shades of green, in case you don't like all your buses to be red. It's possibly the nearest thing there is to a 'coffee table' book of bus pictures, though its seriousness of intent is greater than that description may suggest. At £16.95 it's a bargain and if you have any feeling for London buses in their heyday, you'll get hours of enjoyment from it.

STEPHEN MORRIS

MODELS

EFE

1/76th SCALE BRISTOL RELL with flat screens

Early versions of the Tilling Group's well-known Bristol-ECW RE featured a very flat front with flat glass windscreens and a larger, rectangular radiator grille. This rather bluff frontal appearance has been captured perfectly by the promised second casting of EFE's RE, and appears in standard Tilling green, with the usual cream stripe. It is on route 22A of Southern National bound for Portland Bill, and carries its fleet number on front and rear as did the prototype. There are, correct, single headlamps on the front and even a small fleetname transfer below the radiator grille.

A second version is for Cumberland, in Tilling red and cream on route 44 to Moresby Parks. Unfortunately this is let down by the use of a style of fleetname which was obsolete by the time the H-registered RE would have been built.

An attractive feature of ECW products of the time was the use of cream glazing rubbers for the windows, and this is faithfully captured on the surrounds to the front windscreens. But this is also the only omission on the model, since they are not repeated for the windows on the sides or rear. This is nit-picking really, since the amount of detail on current EFEs is remarkable at the foot of the rear emergency door.

When viewed sideways, these early REs had a slightly uncomfortable upright frontal style, and this too is accurately captured on the model. Indeed it makes one realise how much more attractive the later RE was, once it gained BET-style wrap-round front windscreens and an extra 5in projection below them. We have already seen EFE models of these in Crosville, United Auto, Trent and Badgerline liveries.

JOHN ALDRIDGE

CORGI ORIGINAL OMNIBUS

1/76th scale Neoplan Cityliner

One word comes to mind straight away with this recent casting from Corgi — excellent.

Perhaps less familiar in British shores than its more exotic double-deck 'Skyliner' equivalent, the 'Cityliner' is impressive in itself. Its distinctive lines are excellently captured by Corgi, nicely set off by superb decals and careful application of paint to glazing with no awkward joins. The first version wears red, black and gold trim colours of Parrys International as its N566 AWJ.

The level of casting detail is high and is accurate, with footholds, grilles, doors, access flaps and lights picked out neatly. Roof detail is pleasing, with Sitrak air conditioning pod well depicted, but a solid roof-vent. Superb new wheels feature, again spot-on for accuracy — and the front ones are poseable too.



Decals are magnificent and accurately applied without a blemish, right down to miniature Union Jacks on the rear and a 'Bells of Bridges' windscreen label. Non-corner side window pillars are painted on glazing and most effectively so, with no gaps or difficult joins to see. A windscreen wiper for the upper 'passenger' screen features, but not those for the main, lower screen. Rear-view mirrors are supplied fitted, the nearside arm projecting forward in convincing fashion. Interior is

fashioned in grey with white seat-tops, to hint at antimacassars.

Corgi has excelled itself with this superb model, which is unreservedly recommended. However as Parrys has been one of the very few British customers for the Cityliner it is not easy to see it appearing in all that many liveries!

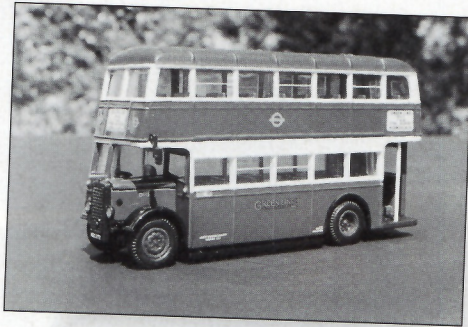
JOHN G. LIDSTONE

CORGI ORIGINAL OMNIBUS

1/76th scale Daimler CW utility

The first version of this casting available for review is in London's Green Line livery as Duple-bodied D145 (HGC 272) of 1945. Having produced a very satisfying 1/50th scale utility, it is pleasing to report that the 1/76th scale follows suit, very nicely capturing the real thing.

The all-important radiator is well reproduced in outline, although is rather flat without a recess for the grille, but this hardly detracts as the shape is good as are the front wings and bonnet, with appropriate access holes painted on. Wheels are new and nicely detailed, with the suggestion of Kirkstall rear hubs.



Roof shaping is excellent, with 'pinched' front dome corners well captured, along with gently stepped rear dome profile, all in deep brown. Opening window detail is newly applied to the inside of the glazing on this casting, thereby enabling a variety of opening window positions to be made.

Unlike some earlier rear-entrance models in this series, the rear platform window is to correct, full, width and its glazing is not noticeable from outside. It carries blinds for Green Line service 722 with RE40 garage/running codes also applied.

All in all, an excellent new casting, but tinged with a sense of *déjà vue* from its more satisfying 1/50th scale predecessor. And EFE is about to produce a 1/76th utility too!

JOHN G. LIDSTONE

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Persuading the public

Sir,

Running through both *Buses* and the general media comment is the desire to put more people on the public transport and out of their cars. How long this is going to take and how it should be achieved are matters that should be discussed more in your columns. *Buses* is read, I am sure, not just by enthusiasts and the industry's employees but by many concerned and interested lay people who just might have something to say.

If we are not careful, though we will limit ourselves to comment on very limited parts of the problem. Robert Forsythe's letter (You Write, *Buses* March) on timetable information was interesting enough — I was moved to write about it myself — but lack of timetable information is not the only reason for not using public transport.

General perception is one item I feel would repay more analysis. Your columns comment rightly on the improvements in bus design seen in the last few years. In my home town of Leicester there are increasing numbers of such vehicles but all on routes that I can never use. My own local route is still host to what we still refer to as bread vans with seats (albeit larger than was the case a few years ago) whose ride is quite atrocious and whose access is difficult enough for the able bodied. The diesel fumes make the short journey a trial. The service ceases after 19.00hrs thus necessitating car ownership for anyone who has to work evenings and weekends.

My car is automatic and has air-conditioning and leaves and returns door to door when I want it to. It needs a very special bus to take me away from that and a special bus is what we see elsewhere in the City, not on our home patch. I know there is little the local operator can do in these circumstances but the facts are still there.

Another debate that could, one hopes, be discussed without rancour and partisanship, is the choice of bus and light rail. I am interested in both and frankly, if opportunity allowed, would return to my birthplace of Manchester and live in an appropriate place in order to travel by tram. This would make me leave the car at home. Swift comfortable travel, and no fumes is a powerful advantage. One which easily transcends the much increased cost of providing the transport corridor in my view and much to be preferred over bus lanes and the like.

Finally, the stick as opposed to the carrot. I share the difficulty of conducting a business and personal lifestyle that requires access to transport to everywhere at all times. I need to commute between Leicester and Loughborough for instance, carrying heavy and bulky objects at times. I need to make a return journey within the hour. I cannot do this by public transport and I never will be able to. The only answer is not to need to do that commute at all! This is going to be the hardest change we make. Losing the individual freedom to travel where we want at all times. Can we rise to that challenge? These and other points need more discussion — can you lead us in that direction?

Robert Bracegirdle
Leicester

The trouble is, many car users 'would use public transport, but . . . ' and then go on to list reasons — all quite valid, of course — why it's not possible in their particular circumstance. Moving from car to public transport takes a conscious effort; perhaps the first step for those of us convinced we need a car for this, that and the other reason could start by looking at those journeys we could do without the car. If all car users went to work once a week by bus, we'd cut peak-hour traffic congestion by 20% at a stroke! But there's no simple answer for commuting, us. I speak as one who until recently used the bus as first choice for commuting, until the service was severely cut — now the choice is reversed. I know I'm not alone, and so cuts in the service have led to fewer users, which will lead to . . . — Ed

A Swiss solution?

Sir,

On a recent business trip to Zurich I stayed in a hotel about 4km from the city centre. Now in this country that would be a considerable distance and the use of a taxi or hire car essential. But not in Zurich. This city, like many others in Europe, takes pride in its public transport. Directly outside the hotel were a tram and bus stops and a railway station. The trams and buses started running at 05.00 — Sundays included — and all public transport stopped at midnight. Trains, trams and buses ran to the main railway station at two to three minute intervals.

At the hotel reception I purchased a 24hr travel pass — and 24 hours means just that: buy a pass at 21.00 one day and use it until 21.00 the next. The pass was valid on all forms of transport, even on steam boats on Lake Zurich — and all for a price of SFr7.80 — about £4.

Another thing which impressed me was the no-one inspected the tickets, yet everyone I observed seemed to possess one that was valid. I do not believe the average Brit to be less honest than the average Swiss; trusting people to be honest seems to work as a system of revenue protection.

My local authority bus operator has a reasonably flexible ticketing system, but it is expensive and restricted to the day of purchase and, of course, to its own buses only. The local Stagecoach companies do not issue through booked tickets, and Rover tickets, costing £5, can be used on FirstGroup routes too, but no-one else's services. With today's technology it should not be impossible for the bus and rail industry to devise ticket deals that are inclusive of passengers' needs. Tickets should surely suit the paying passenger and not simply serve the profit margins of the operators. Or is the operators' bottom line merely profit and not service? A challenge that the conglomerates, or the DETR might wish to comment on?

John Howe,
Cardiff

Vintage horseplay

Sir,

I refer to an item of 'Fleet News' on page 52 of *Buses* June reporting on this company.

I am alarmed to find a content which does not reflect well upon this business and particularly concerned that the item has been sent to yourselves on my headed notepaper purporting to be from a 'company representative'

Following a full inquiry it is evident that an employee, who himself was responsible for the 'blu-tack' number plate incident — and it was not on public view — is also author of the unauthorised letter. The individual concerned will be the subject of a serious disciplinary interview.

I would be grateful if you would please publish a clear indication to your readers that the number plate incident was nothing other than 'driver horseplay' carried out in the person's own time, and that the report of it was not from anyone representing this company. I regret that these stupid actions have caused us all to waste time and effort in this matter, and thank you for your assistance in setting the record straight.

Keith Baynton
Managing Director
Vintage Yellow Buses,
Bournemouth

EuroRider supplier

Sir,

I have just been reading an article in *Buses* June regarding the supply of 20 new Iveco/Beulas EuroRiders to Redwing of London, and was somewhat bemused and surprised to read that these vehicles had been supplied by Iveco.

These vehicles were in fact all supplied by AW Group of Ratby, Leicester who are sole concessionaires for both the Iveco PSV chassis and the Beulas luxury coach range.

I would be grateful if you would mention this in your next issue.

Alan Wilson
Sales Director.
A.W. Group

(Duly mentioned, though I don't think we did say Iveco 'supplied' the coaches. Think they might have built them, though . . . Ed).

This is a letters page and the views expressed therein are purely the views of the writers; they do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or publisher of BUSES.

BOLTON 100

PHILIP LAMB joins the celebrations marking 100 years of public transport in Bolton.

The era of municipal transport began in Bolton in 1899, when the corporation took control of the horse tram system leased from its inception in 1880 until that year to another operator, E. Holden & Son. Also in that year, electric traction was introduced, the last horse tram running in 1900. From 1923, motor buses gradually replaced trams, the system finally closing in 1947. From 1936 until 1956, Bolton owned four trolleybuses and three miles of overhead, forming part of the South Lancs Trolleybus system, with the vehicles operating in SLT livery. In 1970 Bolton became part of SELNEC and thus its municipal era came to a close.

This year therefore marks the centenary of the founding of the Bolton undertaking, the occasion being celebrated by the Manchester Museum of Transport over the weekend of 8/9 May. The event brought together a sizeable number of former Bolton buses from as far away as Lincoln and Keighley. Museum residents Leyland PD2/13 no77 and newly-restored PD2/4 tower wagon ex-no367 were joined by the magnificent LVVS TD1 no54, Crossley SD42/7 no8 and Leyland Atlanteans no232 and SELNEC no6809, the last ordered by Bolton, but delivered to its successor. Not fully restored, but nevertheless making a rare and important public appearance were PD2/13 no81, Leyland PD3/4 no122 and Daimler CVG6-30 no150.

The event was attended by, amongst many other invited guests, two former long-serving Bolton Transport employees, Jack Green and Wilf Collinge. Now aged 87, Jack joined Bolton Corporation in 1929. He was a conductor and apart from a five year gap for service in the forces, stayed in the same job until he retired in 1971. Wilf, now 90, joined the department in 1935 as a tram driver, later becoming a bus driver. Amazingly he passed his test on the now preserved TD1! He became an inspector in 1941 and finally retired in 1973.

Far right:
The oldest surviving Bolton bus, (although two former Bolton employees are much older!), is all-Leyland lowbridge TD1 no54 (WH 1553)
Pictures by PHILIP LAMB

Right
Looking resplendent in Boyle Street is newly-restored all-Leyland PD2/4 tower wagon ex-no367.



Above:
Also resplendent was Leyland Atlantean/East Lancs 232 (FBN 232C), one of two such vehicles preserved by the Bolton Atlantean Group.



Above:
Inside the museum we see restoration projects from left to right: Leyland PD2/13/Metro-Cammell no81, Daimler CVG6-30/East Lancs no150 and Leyland PD3/4/East Lancs no122.

Leicester Pageant

Now in its 12th year, the Leicester Mercury Historic Transport Pageant & Vehicle Parade took place in Abbey Park, Leicester on 23 May. A handy venue for those interested in both the modern and the historic bus scenes as the park is situated opposite FirstLeicester's Abbey Park Road depot, a vast site which provides car parking for visitors to the rally.

Although the event is much more than just a bus rally, the number of buses entering is definitely on the increase, with some operators taking the opportunity to display their latest hardware to the public. For instance a brand new Stagecoach Kingston-upon-Hull Alexander-bodied MAN low-floor service bus made the lengthy journey from its home city.

Preserved vehicles came from far and wide, but local operators like Leicester City Transport, Trent and Barton were well-represented too. On this page we offer just a small selection of the vehicles to be seen.



Above:
Former Leicester PD3/1 164 (TBC 164) with Willowbrook body, now in the care of the Leicestershire Museum of Technology, makes few public appearances these days, but always manages to turn heads when it does.



Above left:
A very long-standing member of the steadily-growing fleet of buses in preservation is this 1940 BMMO SON, still owned by Trent. It received a replica body, built by the company, in 1978
Pictures by PHILIP LAMB



Above:
This Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard is currently a training vehicle in the Trent fleet. Registered with a cherished mark formerly carried by one of Trent's Alexander-bodied Leyland Tiger Cubs, the bus originated within the Scottish Bus Group

Left:
Recently-restored is Bedford OB KNN 314 was formerly South Notts no38.

Below:
This fine Dennis Pax parcels van has received Trent livery.



CALLING ALL ISLANDERS

Amberley Museum in West Sussex is looking for buses which once ran on an island to take part in its annual bus rally, scheduled to take place this year on 19 September. Being a charity, the museum can't pay travelling expenses but would love to see as many Island buses as possible on the day. If you have not already received an invite, please write to Alan Lambert, 7 Nursery Close, Emsworth. PO10 7SP for an application form.

LOWLANDER ALREADY SOLD

Further to last month's report, South Notts No89 (LNN 89E), a rare 1967 Northern Counties-bodied Albion Lowlander had already been repatriated from Zurich, Switzerland, joining the fast growing number of buses and coaches housed at the Nottingham Heritage Centre at Ruddington just to the south of the city. Apart from some slight rot in the lower deck floor, the bus is in excellent condition, and a full restoration is on target for the bus to make its debut at this year's Nocturnal Heart of the Pennines Rally on 31 October.

No89 back home in Nottinghamshire.
PHILIP LAMB



MORRIS OXFORD

The Oxford Bus Museum at Long Hanborough, near Oxford, is staging its Morris-Commercial event on **4 July** in conjunction with the Morris-Commercial Club. The event is expected to include some Morris-Commercial buses, not least the Morris Motors Brass Band coach which is kept at the Oxford museum. Details from Morris-Commercial '99, 14 Branksome Close, Walton-on-Thames KT12 3BE with a large sae.

Another Morris-Commercial Club event takes place at the British Commercial Vehicle Museum, Leyland, on 26 September.

MERCEDES CLUB

A new club dedicated to restoring Mercedes L608D minibuses D500 FAE and D106 VRP has been formed. The club issues a bi-monthly news letter and will be attending various rally events around the country. For more information on the club contact Darren Roberts, East Anglian 608 Club, 4 Arbor Road, Cromer, Norfolk. NR27 9DW. Telephone 01263 51498.

SHOWBUS ADDRESS

Please note that point of contact Simon Bailey lives at **239** Marlow Bottom, and not 259 as stated in this year's rally calendar (*Buses*, April). Sorry for any inconvenience caused.

RIBBLE RALLY

Following long negotiations, the Ribble Vehicle Preservation Trust, a non-profit making limited company has been granted charitable status by the Charity Commissioners.

The Trust, owners of a number of former Ribble Motor Services and associated companies vehicles, will now be able to advance its aims by qualifying for grants, not otherwise available to it, to develop its collection, and premises in which to house it.

By happy coincidence, 1999 sees the 80th anniversary of the formation of Ribble Motor Services in Preston. Therefore the Trust is joining the Friends of the British Commercial Vehicle Museum at Leyland to commemorate the event with a rally of preserved buses formerly operated by the company at the Museum in Leyland on Sunday 19 September, to include a free service over part of the original Ribble route from Preston to Gregson Lane, a village south-east of Preston, operated by past and present Ribble vehicles.

Owners of vehicles formerly operated by Ribble (or joint operators) who wish to enter should write to The Ribble Rally Organiser, BCVM, King Street, Leyland PR5 1LE. Please enclose an SAE for reply.

TILLING-STEVENS BACK ON THE ROAD

Carrying a striking new livery, well-known ex-Altonian Scottish Aviation-bodied Tilling-Stevens K6LA7 GOU 732 has been attracting much attention on the rally scene this year. Following mechanical refurbishment during 1998, in excess of 600 hours have been spent by M and H Coachworks in Leeds laying a new floor, fabricating and installing a new sun roof, re-wiring the interior, re-varnishing the woodwork and repaneling the lower body, before painting in the unique and eye-catching livery of fictitious 'Wulfrun Motor Services', complete with gold leaf sign-writing.

Amongst other appearances, GOU 732 is expected to be running again in Alton at the Mid-Hants Bus Rally on 18 July.

GOU 732 seen at Kidderminster railway station on 14 March last



SOUTHEND PD3 IN FRANCE

Former Southend Massey-bodied, Leyland PD3 335 (CJN 435C) is currently in France. It is owned by Danny Chabaud, who has a business customising old British buses for commercial buyers in France. Being an enthusiast himself, he is extremely careful about what buses he uses in this way. 335 is his pride and joy but he is becoming concerned that he is not doing it justice. He is worried that the exigencies of his business may lead him one day to do something inappropriate to it and that its standing in the open, albeit in the balmy climate of south-west France, will eventually render necessary additional work on what is currently an immaculate vehicle. He is open to purchase or swap offers: his preferred vehicle for a swap is one of the fake historic buses used periodically on London sightseeing work, a type which we would imagine no British enthusiast would mind leaving these shores!

For further information, please get in touch with us at *Buses*.

Ian Allan
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Required reading for industry professionals and enthusiasts alike, BUSES is committed to reporting developments in the industry as and when they happen, in addition to providing an ever-improving window on the bus world for the layman. BUSES also provides up-to-date news coverage on a monthly basis, interesting features and profiles, incisive comment and lively, colourful presentation. BUSES – bigger, brighter and more up-to-date than ever before.

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A1 Buses, Northampton

This new operator, a division of A1 Taxis, has UVG-bodied Dennis Dart SLF S401 JUA, Ikarus-bodied DAF SB220 S402 JUA, Plaxton-bodied Dennis Dart SLF S403 JUA and MCW MetroRider F63 RFS..

ABC Travel, Ainsdale

All four Optare Solos, S11, 22, 33, 44 ABC, are in service.

Aintree Coachline, Bootle

Leyland Fleetline FE30AGR/MCW H43/33F SDA 712S, WDA 672T and Leyland Titans KYV 357X, A904 SYE are acquisitions from Merseyline, Garston, whilst Leyland Tiger TRCL10/3ARZM/Plaxton C53Ft F24 CWO has come from Formby Coaches and B44F Leyland National 2 NL106L11/1Rs YRN 815V, DBV 835W from Ribble. Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton C50F P331 VVR has come from Wallace Arnold and Leyland Leopard PSU3E/2R/East Lancs B51F YBO 18T from Leon of Funningley — Fleetline/MCW NOC 465R also from Leon of Funningley is for cannibalisation only. Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger F24 CWO has been withdrawn and sold to Volvo, Loughborough (dealer).

Ambermile Group

Leyland Nationals CFM 357S and PJ1 3671 have been sold to Wisdom, Leeds (dealer).

Andrews, Tideswell

Bedford OB/Duple Vista C29F MRB 765, which was new to this operator is back in the depot, in poor condition. It has been acquired by Cosy Coaches which intends to restore and operate it alongside similar ATS 408 on Sunday service C1 (Worksop-Creswell).

Andrews-Sheffield Omnibus, Sheffield YT

Another Leyland National 2 NL116L11/1R/B52F from Yorkshire Traction is 2015 (EDT 215V). Volvo B6 124 (M124 VAK) has been transferred to Ecclesfield from Holbrook and renumbered 2224. Van Hool-bodied DAFs 305/6 are confirmed as registered PHE 692, HSV 389 respectively.

Leyland Olympian 1604 is the first double-decker to wear 'Terrier'-style yellow and green livery, following accident repairs.

Leyland Nationals 58 (MLJ 918P), 1812/21 (SWE 446S, GUG 128N) have been withdrawn as has Leyland Tiger 304 (A159 EPA) and Leyland Fleetline 1725 (MOM 577P).

Anglian, Chadgrave

New are Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 T81, 82 JBA and Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer 2 T84 JBA, all for Norfolk/Suffolk County Council services.

Apcoa Parking, Hounslow

An unregistered Scania L94/Wright Access Fioline has been on loan for driver training, used within the confines of the car park only. This pre-empts delivery if the first of 12 Scantias due in May.

Plaxton Prestige-bodied DAF SB220s R575/9/83 FNN have been on loan recently, with Parking Express fleetnames.

Applebys, Conisholme

Now in stock is MCW-bodied Leyland Atlantean YNL 228V from Go-Ahead (OK Travel).

Arriva Colchester AA

Leyland Olympian ONCL10/1RZ/Alexander H47/32F 5094 (F644 LMJ) has been on loan from The Shires, for evaluation of its CCT camera installation.

Volvo B10M-61 3318 (B858 XYR) is route-branded for service 3, whilst MCW Metrobuses 5360/4 (BYX 220/83V) are branded for service 8.

Further fleetnumber alterations are that Leyland Olympians 41/3/5-9 are now numbered 5389/90/7/8, 5407-9; Bova 102 is now 4344 and MCW Metrobuses M220/99, M301/36 are now 5360/9/1/6. Dennis Darts 419/20/2/30 are now 3419 etc.

Arriva Crawley & East Surrey AA

(London & Country)

MCW Metrobuses M521/2/34 and 654 (GYE 521/2/34W, KYV 654X) are acquisitions from London South, M551, 611/5/7/48/60/76 and 709 (GYE 551W, KYO 611/5/7X, KYV 648/60/76, 709X) from London North.

Arriva Cymru AA

New deliveries are Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer SPD B39F SDC560-3 (T560-3 JJC) and Dart/Plaxton Pointer MPD B27F SMC564 (T564 JJC). These entered service without fleetnames. The new DAF SB220s for Wrexham Park & Ride are numbered SPG426-9 (S426-9 MCC).

Further acquisitions are Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/ECW H44/32F DOG219 (WDC 219Y) and similar, but H45/32F DOG257 (C257 UAJ) from Arriva Kent Thameside; Mercedes-Benz 709D/Reeve Burgess B27F MMM296/7 (J296/7 NNB) from Arriva North West; 709D/Alexander B27FL MMM768 (N468 SOA), new to Gem Fairtax, Reigate; Leyland Lynx 2 LX2R11C15Z4S/B49F SLC254, 334 (H254 PAJ, H34 PAJ) from Arriva North East; DAF SB3000/Van Hool C49Ft CDD945 (M945 LYR), is in Arriva livery and route-branded for the Traws-Cambria North Wales-Bristol service.

Recently-acquired Lynxes G34/5 VME are now numbered SLC340/50 respectively. Olympian DOG991 (F991 UME) and Mercedes-Benz MMM725 (L425 CPB) were recently placed in service without fleetnumbers.

Dual-purpose Olympian EOG211 (C211 GTU) now has bus seating retrimmed in blue moquette to H42/27F layout, but is still classified EOG, but sister EOG208 (C208 GTU) has been downgraded as bus DOG208 as H45/32F. Olympians DOG193, 208/57 have been repainted in Flintshire Linxx purple and sand livery, route-branded for service 10; SDD24 is also in Linxx livery, but branded for service 11.

Mercedes minibuses MMM242, 687 (G242 GCC, G87 SKR), Leyland National SNG211 (EWX 211Y) and Bristol VRTs DVG459/75, 503/10 (VCA 459W, WTU 475W, YMB 503/10W) have been withdrawn. Only 13 VRTs remain. Open-top OVG512 (YMB 512W) has been in use at Dolgellau as a tree-lopper.

Disposals are of Leyland National 2s SNG84, SNL727 (VBG 84V, MHJ 727V) to Highland County, via auction, SNG213 (EWX 213Y) to Phillips, Holywell; MAN/Optare Vectas SMM501/2 (M501/2 AJC) are now with Arriva North East, SLL214 and 447 (HIL 2148, EJC 447X) with Arriva Scotland West, but Bristol VRT/SL3 DVG445 (UDM 445V) to Whiting, Pontefract (dealer) for scrap.

Arriva Derby AA (City Rider)

Several Volvo Ailsas are to be retained for further service. First to be treated is 115 (SRC 115X) which now wears Arriva turquoise and is thought the only front-engined double-decker so to do. Other stored Ailsas expected to follow suit are 109/10/2 (SRC 109X etc), whilst 118 (TCH 118X) was reinstated in yellow Citybus livery, as carried by 114/9/21 (SRC 114/9X, TRC 121X) which have remained active. Marshall-bodied Ailsa 122 (STV 122X) is still on site, but is out of use.

As a result of the retention of the Ailsas, the remaining Leyland Fleetlines are to be made available for sale and 309 (MTV 309W) is with Arriva Midland Fox in Leicester. Also with Fox at Stamford are the first Volvo Citybuses to go, 126/7 (YAU 126/7Y).

Arriva East Herts & Essex AA

(County Bus)

Six new Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs are on order for allocation to Grays.

Acquisitions comprise MCW Metrobus H43/28F A988 SYF, another acquired from London North; Mercedes-Benz 811D/B33F 2063 (H35 DGD); 709D/Dormobile B25F 2224 (L424 CPB); Iveco 59.12/Dormobile B25F 2359 (N739 AVW) returned from Southend, and Ford Transits 1108 and 2167 (J976 AKY, SLU 261) from The Shires for use as crew shuttles. Metrobus M233 (BYX 233V) has been numbered 5363.

Wright Handybus-bodied Dennis Dart 3351 (J401 VXV), recently outshopped in Arriva livery, has been written off after a fire. Also withdrawn is Leyland Tiger 4318 (C255 SPC).

Body type

A	Articulated
B	Single-deck bus
C	Coach
DP	Dual purpose, usually coach seats/bus shell
H	Double-decker
L	Lowbridge double-decker (ie with side sunken gangway upstairs. All other types, with conventional gangways are H [Highbridge] regardless of overall height)
O	Open-top
CO	Convertible open-top

Seating capacity

(For double-deckers this is shown with the upper-deck capacity first, eg 43/30, indicating 43 'over' 30. Where these are not known a total figure is given).

Door position

F	Front
R	Rear
C	Centre
D	Dual doors

When platform doors are fitted where these would not normally figure, usually on rear entrance buses, this is indicated by D after the door position. The letter 't' after the door indicates the provision of a toilet whilst L after the door position shows that a wheelchair lift is fitted.

Re-registrations

Where a vehicle is re-registered its previous registration numbers follow in *italic type*, with the most recent given first where it has been registered more than once.

Vehicle reports should be sent to

J. G. Lidstone, 76 Thames Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 2XD.

Please mark your envelope 'Fleet News'.



Arriva Kent & Sussex AA

(Maidstone & District)

Acquisitions from Arriva Kent Thameside are Optare MetroRider MR03/B25F 1974/5 (J974/5 JNL), Mercedes-Benz 814D/Dormobile B33F 1154 (J154 NKN) and Leyland Lynx LX2R11C15Z4S/B49F 3063-5 (G43-45 VME) to cover former Fuggles work. All are in Arriva livery. Meanwhile, from Arriva Surrey & West Sussex come Volvo Citybus B10M-50/Northern Counties H45/35F 7623/4 (G623/4 BPH), still in London & Country livery. Arriva West Sussex has also provided Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/Alexander RL H47/32F 5887 (F580 SMG), also in L&C colours. Further East Lancs-bodied Volvo Olympians are being acquired to allow Metrobuses 5201-5/7-10 (A201 OKJ etc) to go to Arriva Surrey & West Sussex.

Vehicles on loan from other Arriva companies are Dennis Arrow/East Lancs H45/35F AD2/8 (N802/8 TPK) from West Sussex, used until March when they were despatched to Arriva Yorkshire; Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R/Park Royal H43/30F 6172 (XPG 172T) and AN68B/1R/Roe H43/30F 6232/74 (EPH 232V, KPJ 274W) from Kent Thameside and similar AN262 (KPJ 262W) from Arriva Croydon & North Surrey and DAF/Northern Counties Paladin 2 M848 RCP from Kent Thameside.

Sales to record are of Mercedes-Benz 609Ds 1041/6 (E41, 46 UKL) to Hardwick, Barnsley (dealer), 1073/4/8/80/5 (G73, 74 PKR, G78, 80, 85 SKR) to Arriva The Shires; Iveco 59.12s 1713/4 (L287, 714 EKO) to Owens Coaches of Sidcup; Metrobus 5207 (A207 OKJ) to Arriva Crawley & West Sussex and VRs 5846/64 (BKE 846T, FKM 864V) to Ensignbus, Purfleet (dealer).

After a relatively short time in private preservation away from company ownership, Leyland Atlantean 5558 (558 LKP) has been advertised for sale by Wealden, Five Oak Green (dealer).

New Enterprise Leyland Tiger 2210 (TSU 645) has passed to Arriva Midlands North, whilst Bristol VRT/SL3 5825 (YNW 401S) has made its last journey, to Hardwick, Barnsley (dealer) via Arriva The Shires.

Arriva London AA

(Leaside Buses, South London)

New DAF DB250LF/Alexander ALX400s DLA65/6/8 (S265 JUA etc) are the first to feature air-conditioned cabs from new. Earlier DLA38-47 are to be fitted with wheelchair anchor clamps in the centre door area and are being retained on route 168.

The DT-class of Dennis Dart has been much reduced with just DT59, 64 remaining at Enfield and DT62, 68 and 70 at Thornton Heath. DT58, 60/1/3/5-7/9 and 132/43 (H458/60/1/3/5-7/9 UGO, H132/43 MOB) have gone to Arriva NW. MCW Metrobus M346 (GYE 346W) has been at the Enfield workshops undergoing open-top conversion for The Original London Sightseeing Tour. M51 (WYW 51T) has also gone to OLS. Other Metrobus disposals are M168 (BYX 168V), 378/88/95, 417/54/96, 519-22/8/34/48/51/9 (GYE 378W etc), 611/4/5 (KYO 611/4/5W), 648/54/8/60/76, 709/17 (KYV 648X etc, 996 (A996 SYF) to Arriva Southern Counties, refurbished M263 (BYX 263V) to Colchester and refurbished M988 (A988 SYF) to East Herts & Essex. Volvo B10M-55 saloons 912/3/5-7/21 (H912 XYT etc) have gone to Scotland West. Also notable is that some of Arriva London North's low-floor Wright Pathfinder-bodied Scania N113CRLs, SLW1-14 (RDZ 1701-14) have gone to Arriva North West.

Arriva Manchester AA

(Beeline)

Inter-company transfers have seen the arrival of 76, 94 (G106 TND, G124 TJA) and 630/3/4/5 (F630 BKD etc) from Arriva North West, but the departure of 59 (M59 WKA), 138/9 (K884/7 UDB), 404 (MIL 5574), 699 (H679 GPF), 1153-5 (L153-5 UKB) and 1266-8 (M370-2 KVR).

Mercedes-Benz 811D 76, 94 (G106 TND, G124 TJA), Leyland National 2s 271/80-4 (VBG 89V, FCA 10X, NTU 11-13, 15Y) and 1976 have been withdrawn. Previously-withdrawn 27 (D427 NNA) has been sold at auction, 857 (G644 EVN) similarly and now with Bowman, Hartley. 280-3 (FCA 10X, NTU 11-13Y) are now with Arriva Durham County, 390 (B51 XFV) with Pilkington, Accrington whilst 413/8/9 (MIL 7613/8/9) have gone to Arriva Scotland West.

Arriva Midlands North AA

(Midland Red North)

New are Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer MPD 526-9 (T526-9 AOB) for Tamworth.

Acquisitions are Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2R/Plaxton Paramount DP55F 1518 (A518 EVN), TRCTL11/3RH/Plaxton Paramount C53F 1622 (B281 KPF) and TRCTL11/2RH/Paramount C49F 1637/8/40 (C37 CWT etc) from Arriva North East, TRCTL11/2RH/Plaxton Paramount C53F 1613 (A113 EPA) and TRCTL11/3R/Plaxton Paramount C57F 1614 (A153 EPA) from The Shires; Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/Roe H43/29F 2012-4 (A146/8/50 FPG) and ONTL11/1R/ECW H43/29F 2015/6 (B274/5 LPH) from Arriva Crawley & East Surrey. The Tigers and Olympians are at Lichfield 2012/5/6. 2013 is at Cannock.

Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander 394 (P394 FEA) is back from accident repairs and is the first minibus in Arriva livery at Crewe. Leyland Olympian 1954 (A154 UDM) is route-branded for the Crewe-Alsager campus contract. Dennis Dart/Marshall 804 (M804 MOJ) and Mercedes-Benz 811D/Marshall 462 (M462 EDH) have been burnt out and Leyland Olympian 1996 (F96 PRE) has sustained severe roof damage.

Leyland Olympian 1648 (B148 ALG), Iveco 49.10 323 (F323 EHA), Tigers 1702/3/5/6/8/9 (A702 HVT etc) and MCW Metrobus 2070 (KJW 318W) have been withdrawn. Leyland Tigers 1704-6/8/9 (A704 HVT etc) are being fitted with seatbelts for use on Staffordshire school contracts after being replaced by new vehicles at Oswestry. Mercedes-Benz L608D 114 (D24 KKP) is under cannibalisation at Cannock. Renault-Dodge 346 (E96 WCM), Leyland Leopard 1513 (BOK 364T) and Metrobuses 2075/6/92 (UWW 515/7X, D682 MHS) have been disposed of.

Arriva North West AA

(North Western)

New are Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer 2 1706-10 (S723-6 KNV, S393 HVV). Leyland Olympian ONCL10/1RZA/Northern Counties H47/30F 712/3 (G512/3 SFT) have arrived from Arriva Fox County; Dennis Dart 9SDL/Carlyle Dartline B36F 1137/8 (G127/8 RGT) from The Shires, 8.5SDL/Carlyle Dartline B28F 1139-49 (H458/60/1/3/5-7/9 UGO, H132/43 MOB) from Arriva London South; DAF DE02GSSB220/Northern Counties B42F 1701/2 (R396/7 XDA) ex-G Northern, Dennis Dart SLF/SCUK 1703/4 (S406/7 JUA) from Arriva Scotland West, Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer SPD B41F former demonstrator 1705 (S838 VAG) and, from Arriva Cymru, SLF/Plaxton Pointer B39F 1711 (S626 KHN).

Now at work on SMART services 1, 2, 3 and 5 are plain white Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer 2 1701/3/4 (R396 XDA, S406/7 JUA). These services are normally operated by Neoplas 6402-13.

DAF-engined Leyland Nationals 413/9 (MIL 7613/9) have gone on loan to Arriva Scotland West.

Leyland Nationals 202-4/11/9/86/7 (BYW 379, 402/6V, MIL 5581, SCK 693P, VBG 92, 94V), 311/31/4/60/9/72 (NPK 250R, NPK 242P, SPC 279R, EMB 366S, KMA 396T, LMA 412T) have been withdrawn.

Withdrawn 13 (D413 NNA), 202-4/11/40/56/87 (BYW 379, 402/6V, MIL 5581 (LPB 209P), ACW 763R, JOX 515P, VBG 94V), 311/34/57/60/4/72-5 (NPK 250R, SPC 279R, CFM 351S, EMB 360S, GMB 380T, KMA 395/6T, LMA 412T, YTU 986S, GMB 392T, KMA 397T), 942 (PUP 505T) and 1965 (D426 NNA) have been sold at auction. 286 (VBG 92V) is now with Arriva Cymru, but also via auction sale. Of these sales, 13 is now with Barnacle, Thornton, 27 (D427 NNA) with McClaughlin, Penwortham, 202 with Bullock, Cheadle, 203/11 with Pilkington of Accrington, 204 with Products, Warrington (dealer), 256 and 360/72/3 with Esbee, Coatbridge, 357 with PVS, Carlton (dealer), 364 with Wealden, Five Oak Green, 368/9 (KMA 395/6T) and 374/5 all with Alpine of Llandudno

Arriva The Shires AA

Now on order are 15 8.5m Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer MPDs for Luton and Dunstable, whilst eight 9.2m Plaxton Pointer-bodied SLFs are due at Hemel Hempstead. Meanwhile, new SLF/Plaxton Pointer B39Fs received are 3216/7 (S216/7 XPP).

Former Southend Bristol VRT/SL3 YNW 401S was acquired 'on paper' it seems and numbered 5923, but it went for scrap without use.

Now confirmed withdrawn are MCW Metrorider 2020 (E990 DNK), Mercedes-Benz 811D 2063 (H35 DGD), Ford Transit 2167 (SLU 261), Leyland National 2 3031/8 (NRP 581V, GUW 441W), Volvo B10M-61 3077 (NIB 8459), Leyland Tiger 4002 (A152 EPA), Volvo B10M-61 4009 (FIL 4919) and Bristol VRTs 5025/52 (CBD 897T, VVV 957W).

Disposals are of 1108, 2063, 2167 and 2224 (J976 AKY, H35 DGD, SLU 261, L424 CPB) to East Herts & Essex; 1132, 2041/5/8, 2307, 3015/36/8-41/7, 5018, 5874, 5923 (C202 EKJ, E341/35 DRO, F598 CET, F719 CWJ, BVV 545T, GUW 456/41/57/94/61W, IIL 4824, OVV 852R, FKM 874V, YNW 401S) all to Hardwick, Carlton (dealer) for scrap; 2212 (J35 UTG) to Riley of Benfleet; 4002/9 (A152 EPA, FIL 4919) to Arriva Yorkshire; 5161/2/5-7 (H661/2/5/60/7 GPF) to Arriva Manchester; 5163 (H673 GPF) to Tillingbourne; 5164/9 (H674/69 GPF) sold to unconfirmed buyer(s); 5170 (H670 GPF) to Arriva Scotland West and 5922 (BKE 840T) to Whiting, Ferrybridge (dealer) for scrap.

All remaining Bristol VRT/SL3s are now based at Luton and six withdrawn examples are expected to go for export to the United States shortly, 5014/7/25/8 (OVV 851R, IAZ 3977, CBD 897T, ONH 928V) being earmarked.

Arriva Southend AA

Sadly I have to report that use of the 1965 Leyland Titan PD3/6/Massey 334 (CJN 434C) for driver training has ceased following engine problems. Volvo B10M-60 572 (F572 UPB) is temporarily in use for driver training and a Bristol LH is expected shortly as a permanent driver trainer.

Arriva Yorkshire AA

(West Riding)

The recently-acquired Dennis Arrows N801-10 TPK are numbered 501-10. First into service, after repaint into Arriva livery, is 509 based at Heckmondwike. They are expected to be allocated to services 268/269 (Dewsbury-Bradford/Cleckheaton).

A further two Leyland Lynx 2s refurbished are 344/78 (H344 UWV, J378 AWT), both outshopped in Arriva livery with their plastic skirting removed. 344 is from Castleford, where all Lynx 2s are expected to be refurbished. Lynx 257 (E257 TUB) has been withdrawn on return from loan to Cygnet Travel, Darton.

Arrowebrooke, Congleton

Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart SLF S760 RNE is in use (thought from Mistral, but carrying Plaxton legal lettering).

Averon, Melling

All-over white Optare MetroRider S315 KNW is in use.

Avon, Moreton

New Dennis Dart SLF/East Lancs Spryte B37F S54 (S54 NCW) is now at work, as is ex-Reading MCW Metrorider E603 HTF.

Group codes

AA — Arriva Passenger Services
BL — Blazefield Holdings
EY — EYMS Group
FG — FirstGroup
GA — Go-Ahead Group
NX — National Express
ST — Stagecoach Holdings
YT — Yorkshire Traction



Opposite:
Anglian of Chedgrave is running the Dennis Dart SPD, T84 JBA, on tendered services for Norfolk and Suffolk.
JOHN PODGORSKI

Left:
Arriva Midlands North has four Dennis Dart MPDs for Tamworth. Last of the four is 529 (T529 AOB). The short wheelbase and long front overhang rather alters the usual proportions of Arriva's livery; the stone-coloured 'front' extends almost halfway along the bus!

B&D Coaches, Leigh

Unusual vehicles are Plaxton-bodied Dennis Lancets EKA 226/8Y from Perry, Bromyard.

Battersby Silver Grey, Morecambe

Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton S903/4 LHG are in use.

Beestons, Hadleigh

DAF SB220/ikarus B48F L518 EHD is in stock from First Leeds, whilst Volvo B10M/Van Hool C50Ft 131 ASV (G260 RNS) is in stock from Eastern National (as driver trainer there). Former Flights Volvo B10M-53/Plaxton 4000 CH55/12Dt FHJ 565 (A12 HOU, A4 FTG, FTG 9, G727 JOG) is ex-Hamilton of Uxbridge. Bristol VRT/SL3 SJI 4431 (MEL 562P) has been withdrawn and sold to Home James, Totton, Leyland National RBU 183R to Supreme, Hadleigh (Essex). Leyland Atlantean TPU 67R has gone to Chariots of Stanford-le-Hope.

Biss Brothers Coaches

New is Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 S312 DLG.

Crystals-bodied Mercedes-Benz P437/8 OVW have been withdrawn and sold to Airport Coaches, Stansted. Van Hool T815 G47 FVW has also been sold.

Blackburn Transport

Further ex-London General Optare MetroRiders numbered are 612/3/4 (J708/03, 694 CGK). Leyland Atlantean 139 (WRN 139V) has been sold.

Blackpool Transport

Optare Solo/B30F demonstrator S794 XUG has been in use, temporarily numbered 500.

Service changes have led to all remaining Leyland Atlanteans acquired by Fylde being taken out of service and stored; thus retired are former Manchester 465-9 (ONF 660/6/73R, SRJ 756/7R), former Clyde Coast Services 470 (TSD 571S) and all remaining ex-Kingston-upon-Hull examples, open-top 452-5 (TKH 266H, WRH 294J, ARH 307/4K) and roofed 487/9/92 (MIW 8187, RIB 4089, NIW 6942). Also delicensed is 481 (HRN 101N) new to Fylde. Apart from open-toppers 452/4, these vehicles have been transferred from Rigby Road to the now-redundant Squires Gate depot for storage. A shortage of led to the unusual sight of former Fylde Borough 492 (NIW 6492) appearing on Rigby Road-based services 14/14A (St Annes-Fleetwood), followed by 444/5 (TKH 266H, ARH 307K).

Single-deck Northern Counties Paladin-bodied Atlanteans 134-7 (TKU 462/5/6/9K) have again been advertised for sale after recent disuse and are also despatched from Rigby Road.

Sadly, the era of half-cab public service is now over, consequent upon the sale of under-used ex-Eastbourne open-top Leyland Titan PD2 432 (DHC 784E) to a private owner in Edinburgh. The last two remaining Titans are the two trainers, 907/16 (HFR 507/16E). The withdrawal of VW LT55/Optare CityPacers will remove the need for manual-gearbox trainers, so this could be their last summer in use.

Former Trent Leyland Olympian 405 (XAU 705Y) suffered substantial front-end damage after the tow-bar on ERF tow-wagon 929 (FNO 357T) failed, and a decision is pending as to its future.

The Seagull Coaches operation is now effectively ended by the sale of 21 and 25-27 (F699 ENE, G813 RNC, J26 LRN, R927 TRF) to Belle Vue Bus & Coach Auctions (dealer), with 22 and 24 (F700 ENE, G812 RNC) retained to honour existing work but now delicensed.

Black Prince Buses, Morley

Further ex-Newport Marshall-bodied Scania BR112DH withdrawn are 85 and 91 (JBO 85, 91W), whilst 87 (JBO 87W) has gone to Wigley, Carlton (dealer) for scrap.

Bluebird, Moston

A new Wright-bodied Dennis Dart SLF is 2 (T2 BLU), earlier Wright-bodied S5, S6 BLU being numbered 55 and 56 respectively. Plaxton-bodied Mercedes-Benz Varios R18, 19 BLU are numbered 18 and 19.

Acquired Alexander-bodied MCW Metrobuses D676/8/80/2/3 MHS from Stevensons are now numbered 76 etc.

Ivecos 2, 3 (K2, 3 BLU) have been withdrawn; 2 is now with MR Travel of Rochdale.

Blue Bus, Horwich

New deliveries are Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer MPD B26F 10 and 11 (T10, 11 BLU) and two more are due later as 41 and 42.

Two more rebodied Leyland Tigers are now in stock, MNS 6Y with new East Lancs B51F body, re-registered WJI 9072 and renumbered 72, whilst former Eastern National 65 (EWR 657Y) is now renumbered to 74.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard 18 (ULS 318T) has been withdrawn and sister 25 (GMS 294S) has gone to Hardwick, Carlton (dealer) for scrap.

Boons, Boreham

Mark Boon has transferred the Boons Coach operations to Windmill Coaches, Stanway; however, the school bus operations are being retained. Panoramic-windowed 1967 ex-Edinburgh JSC 883E has been sold for preservation.

Bowers, Chapel-en-le-Frith

Leyland National B49F JOX 510P and NOE 587R are in stock from Stagecoach Midland Red, as are similar PTT 80R and VPT 596R from Ludlows of Halesowen.

Freight Rover Sherpa/Dormobile B16F B959/61 WJH have been acquired from Hardings Travel.

Berkhof-bodied Scania K113CRB 205 AFC and Irizar-bodied K113CRB M323 VET have both been withdrawn and sold to Tanners Croft of Redditch.

Brighton & Hove GA

Further new double-deckers are Dennis Trident/East Lancs Lolyne H47/32F 801-10 (T801-10 RFG), all based at Whitehawk and in Metro Line 1 burgundy livery. All Tridents are to be named, 801-10 becoming *King Charles II*, *Capt Nicholas Tettersell*, *Prince Regent*, *Dr Richard Russell*, *Maria Fitzherbert*, *Martha Gunn*, *Phoebe Hessel*, *Magnus Volk* in order. The buggy areas are being modified to incorporate seven tip-up seats, complementing 26 conventional seats. 802 was the first into service.

New Volvo B10M-6200s 503/4 (T503/4 RPN) carry red/cream fleet livery. Bristol VRT/SL3s 619/42 (UWV 619S, XAP 642S) have been withdrawn and stored pending disposal at Lewes Road, Mercedes-Benz 811D 340 (F40 XRP) being withdrawn and sold.

Brylaine, Boston

A substantial batch of re-registrations has been effected as XAZ 1293/4/7 (G37 SSR, ENP 666W, G39 SSR); XAZ 1301/10/2/4-6/20/1/46/98/9 (A820 LEL, A41 SKL, CJF 109Y, ETA 101Y, RAZ 6947, GBZ 8912, XAO 134Y, YRB 652Y, BBY 430Y, PJI 1823, FDV 142Y) and XAZ 1403/4/8-13 (BUH 219V, CBV 791S, FCA 7X, CCY 817V, SCH 116X, HNN 115V, SDA 564S, USO 184S).

Fords NDW 40X, LTG 278X and BEY 440W are now withdrawn, whilst ODJ 587/93W are now under cannibalisation, whilst OJS 27T has gone to Windleys, Tattershall (dealer). Bedford VAS5 GTM 123T has been scrapped.

Bullock, Cheadle

The very last Northern Counties Palatine II-bodied Volvo Olympians S957-60 URJ carry livery style as per the recent low-floor Optare Spectras, but without 'easy access' lettering. They are H47/30F.

An acquisition is Leyland National 10351/2R/B44F BYW 379V from Arriva North West, joined unusually by Bristol LH6L/ECW B45F NDE 619R from Vickers of Workshop, the latter thought for use as a driver trainer.

Plaxton-bodied Dennis Javelin M785 NBA has been withdrawn and sold to Caetano (dealer).

Burtens, Haverhill

New vehicles now at work are Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 B31F S101-3 VBJ.

Interesting arrivals are Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3RZM/Plaxton DP69F G234 BRT (03-KJ-43) and G235 BRT (03-KJ-43). Other acquisitions are, from Tellings-Golden Miller Dennis Javelin/Plaxton C57F M30 TGM and Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton C29F P40 TGM. Mercedes-Benz 811D/Dormobile B33F K7 BUS is now in stock from Baker of Biddulph, as is Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer B40F M801 OJW ex-MK Metro.

Plaxton-bodied DAF SB3000 D284 XVX has been withdrawn and sold to Pratt of Moreton Valence.

Cambridge Coach Services BL

New Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Premiere 320/2-4 (S320 VNM etc) are at work, 322-4 named *Churchill College*, *Lucy Cavendish* and *Downing College*, as well as route-branding for services 78/79, 325 (T325 APP) mentioned last month has wheelchair fittings and has replaced Van Hool Alizée C53F-bodied B10M 350 D350 KVE) — which was the last of its batch of 10 bought new by Premier Travel before the formation of CCS.

Volvo B10M 398 (G98 RGG) has been withdrawn.

Cardiff Bus

Fifteen Dennis Dart/Plaxton MPDs are on order for delivery in September. Withdrawn East Lancs-bodied Leyland Olympians 514/5/7 (A514 VKG etc), sold to Guide Friday, have come back here again in a new guise as open-toppers for the City tours programme, operated jointly between Guide Friday and Leisurelink (Wales), but garaged with Cardiff Bus.

Sales of withdrawn Bristol VRT/SL3s 351/74/6 (WTG 351T etc) were cancelled. 351/67/9 (WTG 351T etc) have now passed to Long of Abercraze, 362 (WTG 362T) to NGP Film Services, Tonypany and convertible open-top 359 (WTG 369T) to Vintage Yellow Buses, Bournemouth.

Carnell, Sutton Bridge

MCW Metrobus/MCW H43/30F KJW 284W has been acquired.

Carter's, Colchester

Dodge S56/Alexander AM B25F E351 WYS is in stock from Wilson of Carnwath. Northern Counties-bodied Dodge F324 VEF *Valerie* has been damaged by fire.

Cass, Moreton

Former Metroline MCW Metrobus/H41/28D A707/9 THV is added to stock, but A725 THV has gone onward to Huggins of Wallasey.

Castle Buses, Speke

Bristol VRT/SL3 ERU 213V and Leyland Royal Tiger RJ1 4562 have been burnt out in a fire at the depot.

Castle Motor Services, Birkenhead

Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D D221 SKD is in stock from Midland Fox.

Chester City Transport

Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B41F demonstrator S868 VAG has been in use on Park & Ride service 15. An unregistered Scania N113DRB/East Lancs DPH47/31F has also been on loan.

Renault S56s 36 and 41 (E136 XCA, E41 YMB) have passed to Welco of Newcastle.

A replacement depot is being sought, with a planning application in place for a site in Liverpool Road, Chester.

First Manchester is repainting ex-Timeline vehicles into fleet livery; 6604 (R216 SBA) is a former Timeline Optare Excel.
PHILIP LAMB



Clarkson, South Elmsall

Iveco 49.10/Dormobile Routemaker II B23F J120 LKO are an acquisition from East Kent. A Mercedes-Benz O.404/Hispano Vita C49F has also come into stock.

Cygnnet, Darton

Vehicles not yet sold remain stored at Belle Isle Yorkshire depot. Leyland National 2 30 (RSG 816V) and Leyland National 35 (VNO 731S) have passed to an unidentified operator in Eire, whilst Freight Rover Sherpa L3 (D460 CKV) has passed to a public house in New Lodge, Barnsley, for non-psv use.

Dunn-Line, Nottingham

New deliveries are of Scania L94IB/Irizar C57F S374 SET and T37-39 CNN, along with similar, but C49Ft sisters T41-43, 45-49 and 52 CNN.

An acquisition to record is of Volvo B12/Jonckheere CH57/16C M724 UAO (XfV 257) from Impact Travel, Carlisle and now re-registered L6 BOB.

Now withdrawn are Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tigers 729 URB (*CDG 215Y*) and Bova Futuras K293/5 GDT, sold to Yeates, Loughborough (dealer); Berkhof-bodied Dennis Javelins N869/70/3 XMO, now with Taw & Torridge, Merton and sisters N871/2 XMO, now with Semmence of Wymondham; Jonckheere-bodied Volvo B10M J531 JNH and Plaxton-bodied Javelins P744/5 GNU, now with Scania Sales, Workop (dealer).

Eastbourne Buses

Dennis Dart SLF/Caetano Compass demonstrator S512 XCR has been on loan, temporarily numbered 512.

East Yorkshire EY

AEC Routemaster 817 (LDS 239A, *WLT 727*) has been taken out of store and converted to open-top for use on Scarborough seafront services this season. 801/2 remain stored and are not to be relicensed to provide inclement weather replacements for open-toppers as reported before.

Volvo B10M/Van Hool 88 (HIL 5697) is now re-registered 334 EYL. Duple-bodied Leyland Tiger 52 (E52 URH) has been withdrawn.

George Edwards & Son, Bwlchgwyn

DAF DE02LTSB220/Optare Delta B49F S403 JUA is now in stock from Arriva Bus & Coach (dealer), for use on local services between Wrexham and Minera/Gwynfryn. This is one of the last Deltas built and may be one of the last non-low floor single-deckers to enter traffic.

Duple Dominant bus-bodied Bedford YMT C472 LKU has been withdrawn and sold to E. Jones & Son of Ponciau.

EMS, Greasby

Carlyle-bodied Freight Rover Sherpa E822 VOJ is now in use on service 29 (Chester-Willaston).

Eurotunnel, Folkestone

Dual-door Marshall Capital-bodied Dennis Dart S715 KNV is owned.

Express Motors, Hulland Ward

The only double-decker, Bristol VRT/SL3 XNV 887S, has been short-lived and has been sold. Also withdrawn are former London Bristol LH6Ls KJD 421P and QJD 89R.

Express Travel Services, Speke

New Dennis Dart SLF/East Lancs Spryte S402 HVV is at work here.

Finglands, Rusholme EY

New here is Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Premiere 350 C49Ft 370 (T370 JVR), in executive coach livery. Leyland Atlantean 1722 (ONF 665R) has passed to Shamrock of Pontypridd.

First Badgerline FG

Dennis Lance/Northern Counties demonstrator P87 BPL is at work here, temporarily numbered 9978, to cover for Plaxton-bodied Lancs returned for remedial work.

First Beeline FG

It is confirmed that 15 DP-class Dennis Dart 9SDL3053/Plaxton Pointer B32F are due from CentreWest as 218-32 (N818-32 FLW) as RW-class Renault S75 replacements. Further Renault S75s withdrawn are RW1, 2, 10 and 14 (HDZ 5401 etc).

First Bradford FG

Leyland Atlanteans 6197 and 6203 (JUM 197, 203V) have passed to PVS, Carlton (dealer) and 6442 (FVR 266V) is now with First Manchester.

First Calderline FG

Leyland Fleetlines 7205/33/47 (PTD 646S, BVR 53T, BVR 69T); similar 7232 (ANA 48T) has gone to PVS, Carlton (dealer). have been withdrawn. Leyland Olympians 5156/8 (F156/8 XYG) have transferred to PMT.

First Capital FG

Leyland National 2s 738/40/8/51 (KRS 538/4V, B358 LOY, NLP 391V) and Volvo B10M-61s 797/9 (D497/9 MYS) have gone to Eastern National.

First CentreWest FG

AEC Routemasters RM1292, 1676 (NVS 485, 292 CLT; 676 DYE) and RMC1492 (492 CLT) have been sold to private buyers. Dennis Darts DP24/5/7, 31/2 (N824 FLW etc) have passed to Beeline.

First Cymru FG

Volvo B10M 104 (K386 DWN, *J4 SWT*) has been returned off-lease to Roadlease, Anston (dealer).

First Eastern Counties FG

More new saloons are Scania L94UB/Wright Access Fioline 579/80 (T579/80 JNG) — of these, 575-80, are DP43F. L94s 565/71 are at Kings Lynn, 566/8 at Norwich, 567/9/70/2-4 at Ipswich with 575-8 awaiting allocation.

Yet more acquisitions are Mercedes-Benz 709D/Reeve Burgess Beaver B23F 871/2 (H361/59 LJN) from Thamesway, at Norwich. 872 has been quickly outshopped in livery, but 874 has been in use in Thamesway colours.

Recently-acquired Leyland Olympian F154 XYG is numbered 89 and ECW-bodied FUM 495/8Y are 91, 90. Bristol VRs 238/51, 326 (HAH 238V, PCL 251W, PVG 26W), Leyland National 2 629 (KEP 829X) and National Greenway 651 (DPW 781T) have gone to Stephenson, Rochford (dealer).

Confirmation of Bristol VRT/SL3s scrapped are that 171/8, 215/26 and 331-4 (MEX 768P, NAH 141P, BRF 691T, DEX 226T, KKE 731-4N) went to Wigley, Carlton (dealer); 134/65/80/1/4/94, 214 and 311 (RAH 134M, MCL 941P, OEL 236P, OPW 181P, ODL 657R, TEX 404R, WWY 118S, CJO 471R) to Spall of Dallingham (dealer); 163/4/76/85/6/93, 211 (OUP 683P, MCL 940P, NAH 139P, ODL 658/9R, TEX 403R, YNG 211S) to Hardwick, Carlton (dealer) and 170/83/97, 217/45 and 339 (MEX 769P, WDM 345R, TEX 407R, BCL 217T, GRA 841V, RVF 36R) to Jordan of Coltishall (dealer).

First Eastern National FG

New deliveries are Scania L94/Wright B43F 650-4 (T650-4 SSF) for service 65 based at Colchester.

Unusual acquisitions are 1601/2 (D497/9 NYS), Volvo B10M-61/Duple Dominant B55F from First Capital and now at Chelmsford. From Thamesway come Mercedes-Benz 709D/Reeve Burgess Beaver B23F 346/52/8/60/70/8 (H356/63 LJN, H369/71/81/9 OHK), 346/52 allocated to Braintree, 358/70/8 at Clacton and 360 to Reserve.

Further ageing acquisitions from Capital are Leyland National 2 NL116TL11/3R/B49F 1941 (NLP 391V) and NL106L11/1R/B44F 1942/3 (KRS 534/8V, *GSO 1, 4V*), which are not expected to enter service. Another acquisition is Plaxton-bodied Bedford YMT 9411 (FTO 549V) for use as a driver trainer.

Reserve Bristol VRT/SL3 3110 (XHK 215X) is back in use at Chelmsford, 3219/20/8 (VTH 941T, WTH 949T, LWU 469V) at Colchester, which has also received 3079 (STW 23W) from Chelmsford. Leyland Nationals 1850/99 (YEV 308S, DAR 121T) have been withdrawn.

Volvo B10Ms 1132/3 (131 ASV, 6220 WY) have been sold to Stephenson, Rochford (dealer) and VR 3234 (NUM 339V) to Hardwick, Carlton (dealer) for scrap.

First Huddersfield FG

From Eastern National come nearly-new Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer SPD B41F 3359-63 (R722-6 HHK), which served in Colchester for only 10 months.

First Leeds FG

Accident-damaged Optare-bodied Leyland Olympian 5149 (C150 KBT) has been transferred from Bradford and is being repaired at Bramley with parts from withdrawn 5036 (CUB 36V).

Leyland Atlantean 6116/75 and 6232 have passed to PVS, Carlton (dealer) but 6236 and 6327 (KWY 236V, VVV 327X) have been repainted in Leeds livery. Volvo B10M-60 1422 (L22 YRL) has been withdrawn.

First Leicester FG

All the ex-Ipswich Dennis Falcons at Northampton are expected to come here of which 629/30 (C109/11 SDX) were first. There are suggestions that three S-registered Scania may migrate to Northampton, with Northampton's 341-3 (R341-3 SUT) coming here in exchange.

Dennis Dominators 57 and 60 (VAY 57X, XJF 60Y) have been withdrawn but may make a return to service once more. Dominator withdrawals are of 41, 48 and 182 (TBC 41, 48X, FUT 182V), all sold to Norths, Sherburn-in-Elmet (dealer) and were due to be followed by Iveco minis 721/6 (F721/6 PFP), but 729 (G729 WJU) is now with Mark Kicks, Leicestershire.

LAG coaches 5 and 6 (RJI 5704/6) have passed to Houston Ramm, Sudden (dealer). Leyland Leopard 25 (GMS 297S) has gone to First Leeds where it has replaced ex-Leicester MCW Metrobus 37 (GYE 413W). Metrobuses 36/8 (EYE 332/30V) are now with First Capital, following earlier Leicester Metrobuses 36/7 (FUT 36/7V) which are now driver training vehicles.

First Mainline FG

Volvo B10BLE/Wright Renown B41F 815-23/6-30 (T815 MAK etc) have been delivered, the first of 70 B10BLEs due in traffic by the summer. Registrations for the first 50 are reserved as 815-64 (T815-64 MAK), with the batch completed by 865-84, 815-44 have roller-blind indicator displays, 845-84 with Hanover electronic displays. These are intended for Rotherham (815-27) and the Maltby corridor, Doncaster (828-41) for the Rossington corridor and Olive Grove (842-84) for services 53, 60 and 97.

Existing Mainline-liveried B10BLEs allocated to service 60 are to migrate to services 22/22A, in turn releasing Dennis Darts for service 95 which will work with ten SPDs. Delivery of the new double-deckers for Olive Grove is now expected in January next year. Some Mercedes-Benz 709Ds are thought due into stock from Rider Group also.

Purple-liveried Dennis Dominator 2146 (NKU 146X) has been reinstated at Olive Grove and 2149/51 (NKU 149/51X) at Rotherham. 2148/9/51 had lost yellow 'Bargain Bus' lettering. Dominator 2488 (D488 OWE) has been refurbished with modular bus seating in place of its former DP seating and is quoted as H43/30F. Volvo B10M-55 638 (G638 NWA) is also refurbished and accident-damaged 687 (H687 THL) is also back in traffic after repairs.

Dominator 2102 (KKU 102W) out of use following a fire. Dominators now disposed of are Alexander-bodied 2101/4/6/10-7/21-3/5/8/9/30/5/7-44/50-2/3/6/61/6/73/6/8/88/96/7, 2223/69 and 2420, along with Northern Counties-bodied 2269 and 2318. Dodge 216 (E216 XWG) is under cannibalisation, whilst the remains of Dodges 247/9 (E407/9 BCT) have been taken away by PVS, Carlton (dealer). MCW Metrobus 1859 (JHE 159W) has also gone to PVS.

First Manchester FG

New deliveries are Scania L94UB/Wright B40F 111/3/5 (S651 RNA, S113/5 TNB), Volvo B10BLE/Wright B41F 675/6 (S675/6 SVU) and Volvo B10LA/Wright Fusion AB55F 2001-5/7/10 (S111 FML, S992-5 UJA, T507/10 JNA).

An acquisition for driver training is Leyland Leopard PSU3E/3R/Alexander AYS B53F GSU 838T from Rider Group. Leyland Tiger 402 (G58 RND) has been on loan to PMT's Pennine unit.

Inter-company transfers see departure of 404/7/12 (G62, 65, 70 RND), 1171/2 (P871/2 TAV), 1716/31-4 (F597 FAM, J32, 34-36 KLR) and 1997-9 (F139/40 HNC, E181 UWF) to First Pioneer, which has its own O-licence.

Leyland Atlanteans 4414/39/58/81/92 (SND 414X etc), 4534 (ANA 534Y), 4971/7/81/5/90 (DWH 687/93/7, 701/6W), trainers 4642/62 (ANA 642Y, A662 HNB) and 4768 (A768 NNA) and MCW Metrobuses 5014/34/9/56/68/88 (GBU 14V, MRJ 34, 39, 56, 68W, ORJ 88W) and 5127/8 (SND 127/8X), have been withdrawn. This removes the last Atlanteans from driver training at Manchester.

Volvo B6s 1090-2 (M204-6 LNC) have been sold to Volvo, Loughborough (dealer); Dennis Dominos 1161/2 (C41, 46 HDT) for preservation; Leyland Fleetline 4150 (MNC 493W) and Atlanteans 4433/66 (SND 433/66X) to PVS, Carlton (dealer); Atlanteans 4960/71/37/81/5/8 (BCB 613V, DWH 687/9/93/7, 701/4W) to Rider Group — 4971/7/81/5/8 for cannibalisation — 4990 (DWH 706W) to the SELNEC Preservation Society; ex-Aberdeen Atlantean trainer TV277 (HRS 277V) to Accrington College. Atlanteans 4416 and 4619 (SND 416X, ANA 619Y) have also been sold, along with Ford R1114/Duple Dominant IV driver trainer 1440 (TND 102X) and MCW MetroRider 1691 (E241 UWR). The remains of Atlantean trainers 4642 and 4768 (ANA 642Y, HWT 54N) have been scrapped after use in a Greater Manchester Fire Service exercise.

Group codes

AA — Arriva
Passenger
Services
BL — Blazefield
Holdings
EY — EYMS Group
FG — FirstGroup
GA — Go-Ahead
Group
NX — National
Express
ST — Stagecoach
Holdings
YT — Yorkshire
Traction

First Northampton FG

Further MCW Metrobuses are now in stock here from Leicester, comprising DR102/35/Alexander RL H45/33F 31-35 (AUT 31-35Y), along with another ex-Midland Bluebird DR102/28/Alexander RL H45/33F as 270 (ULS 636X).

The dual-door double-deck era has ended with the withdrawal of Alexander-bodied Bristol VRs 54, 70 (CNH 54T, VVV 70S). Also withdrawn are Volvo B10M 9 (PSU 630), Dennis Javelin 10 (LSK 527), Leyland Tigers 17 and 18 (FFK 312, BUT 18Y), ex-Ipswich Dennis Falcons 627-9/31 (C107-9 SDX, YDX 100Y) and Renault S75 713 (HDZ 5474) — just two S75s remain active.

Exactly a year after the whole fleet was disabled by the Easter floods of 1998, two-thirds of the fleet was disabled by vandalism, when more 75% of vehicles had windows smashed. An immediate and effective rescue operation again swung into place, with vehicles arriving from Leicester, Kinchbus. Confidence of Oadby offered 14 vehicles, noted being former municipal Leyland Atlanteans 18, 23-25, 29, 30 and 33 (VWM 83L, HOR 305/6N, KSA 183P, MNU 625/31/2P) originating with Southampton, Portsmouth, Aberdeen and Nottingham. Former Cardiff Leyland Olympian RBO 510Y was present, still in Cardiff orange, another unidentified A-registered example wearing Confidence colours. Kinch provided three former London Leyland Titans and ex-Nottingham Atlantean RNU 432X. Leicester resurrected Alexander-bodied Bristol VRT/SL3s 49, 52, 53 and 74, 75 (CNH 49, 52, 53T, ABD 74, 75X), also providing reserve fleet Dennis Dominators 179/84, 205/6/50/7 (FUT 179/84V, NFP 205W, MUT 206W, FUT 250V, MUT 257W) and Scania saloons 345/58 (R344 SUT, S358 MFP).

First Pioneer FG

Acquisitions to record are Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3RH/Duple C51F A59, 60 FRS from Lothian and Mercedes-Benz 709D/Reeve Burgess B23F 1841-3 (H372/4/3 OHK) from Thamesway. Inter-company transfers see the arrival of 404/7/12 (G62, 65, 70 RND), 1171/2 (P871/2 TAV), 1717/31-4/54 (F597 FAM, J32, 34-36 KLR, F670 XMS) and 1997-9 (F139/0 HNC, E181 UWF) from First Manchester.

First Pioneer livery is yellow and purple, in which 412, 1171/2, 1717/31-4 and 1841 are outshopped, with 1843 conveniently being similar in Thamesway scheme (1842 carries an overall advertisement for Arien along with 1997).

MCW Metroliner double-decker KUX 774 (A120 KBA) has been withdrawn and sold to Stephenson, Rochford (dealer). Pioneer vehicles are based at Miall Street, Rochdale, formerly the home of Bee Line Buzz Co operations.

First PMT FG

More Timeline Leyland Tiger TRBL10/3ARZA/Alexander N B55F on loan are G64, 71 RND from First Manchester, temporarily numbered 290/1 at Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The last Leyland National, ex-Crosville CNG298 (GMB 377T), has bowed out with mechanical failure. It was taken to Newcastle-under-Lyme before going to Adderley Green and is not expected to return to service.

Leyland Olympians DOC756/9 (G756/9 XRE) now carry route-branding for service X39 (Potteries-Alton Towers). Former Crosville Bristol MW6G G539 (DFM 208C) has passed to a private owner in the Bournemouth area.

First Provincial FG

First Provincial and First Southampton now share the same management, but the two separate fleet identities are to be maintained and so I am requested by the companies to show news as such. The umbrella title of First Hampshire will not be used at this stage accordingly.

Confirmation of seating capacities of recent deliveries are that Volvo B10BLE/Wright Renown 351-63 (S351-4 NPO, S355-63 XCR) are to B41F layout and Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer 635-42 (S635-42 XCR) are B37F. Darts 355-63 are diverted from Southampton.

Iveco 59.12/Marshall B27F R829 GKX, temporarily numbered 200, has been on loan as a float vehicle to cover for work on Ivecos here. Dennis Dart SLF/Marshall Capital B27F S979 JLM has also been on loan and was numbered 102.

Acquisitions from Southampton are Leyland National 2/B52F 428 (AAE 653V) and similar, but DP47F 429 (AAE 663V). Leyland National 304 (HOR 416L) is to be donated to Fareham Tertiary College for conversion into a mobile information technology and exhibition vehicle — earlier reports as to it being earmarked for preservation were incorrect. Leyland National 317 (RUF 37R) has passed to preservationists in Chichester.

Ford Transit/Dormobile 950 (C443 BHY) is an acquisition from ancillary stock from Southampton as a publicity unit.

Iveco 59.12s 229/53/63/4 (K710 UTT, K921 VDV, L314/5 BOD) are now single-door (B28F), but 221/3-8/30-3 (K701/4-9/12/5/6/23 UTT) have been transferred initially to Portsmouth for conversion to single-door (also B28F) prior to sale to First Cymru. 221/3/5 have been noted in SWT two-tone green and red, these being the first 'Linners' withdrawn. Other withdrawals are Bristol VRT/SL3 502 (NTC 573R), Mercedes-Benz 709D 719 (N719 GRV) and 811Ds 801/6/11/2/5/21 (H171/6, 783/7 GTA, H991/7 FTT), the 811Ds also taken to Portsmouth, these being the last of their type. 502 and 719 have gone to Western National at Plymouth, both being repainted prior to despatch, the 811Ds going to Southampton and are in use with the same fleetnumbers.

First Southampton FG

Leyland Lynxes and corporate-liveried Volvo and Dennises have had 1000 added to their fleetnumbers and the gas-powered Darts have their fleetnumbers increased by 2000 — further details will be given when confirmed.

First Thamesway FG

Short wheelbase Dennis Dart/Marshall demonstrator S979 JLM has been on loan.

Vehicles are now being repainted into the rather more plain new livery at the rate of approximately one per week; the yellow used is much darker than hitherto — almost an ochre shade, combined with plain deep horizontal skirt in pink. Bold black fleetnumbers are carried. Dennis Darts 945/6/51 (N945 CPU etc) and Lynx 1409 (F409 LTW) are now treated, the livery being similar to the original Thamesway scheme, but with darker yellow and pink instead of maroon, without the cantrail trimstripe.

The two highbridge Leyland Olympians, 4022/3 (TPD 105/11X), are to be transferred elsewhere in FirstGroup and replaced by ex-Rider FUM-Y Olympian ONLXB/1R/ECW H45/32F. These were the only full-height double-deckers operated in many years.

Leyland Lynx 1431 (D875 ELL) has been returned to working condition at Hadleigh, and has gone to PMT. It had been rejected by Badgerline and Eastern Counties. Mercedes-Benz 709D 322 (H329 LJN) has been withdrawn, while 344/7/9/50/65/7/73 (H354/57/9/61 LJN, H376/8/84 OHK) have passed to Eastern Counties and 361-3 (H372-4 OHK) to First Manchester. Mercedes L608D 2252 (C230 HCV) has been stripped for spares and sold for scrap.

First Wessex FG

Volvo B6/Alexander Dash B40F 6901-4 (N787-9 EUB, N391 EUG) are acquisitions from Yorkshire Travel. Carrying First SkyBlue fleetnames, they carry allover pale blue, with white roof and are used on service X79 (Broadmead-Hartcliffe) replacing Leyland Nationals.

First York FG

Dennis Dart SLF/Alexander ALX200 B37F 3355/6 (T359/6 VWU), are the first of 10 due this year. They were delivered with conventional roller-blind indicator displays, but are to gain dot-matrix electronic units.

The last Bristol VRT/SL3, 1980-built 746 (PUM 149W), soldiers on. Leyland Atlantean 6435 (MPG 293W) is withdrawn and Atlanteans 6231 and 6433 (KWY 231V, KPJ 291W) are currently licensed. 6435 was used for filming at Intake High School after withdrawal, along with Leyland Olympian 5032 (CUB 32Y)

Bristol VRT/SL3 755 (PWY 41W) has passed to Eastern Counties, Atlantean 6435 (MPG 293W) to a dealer for scrap.

Gatwick Flyer, Romford

Bristol VRT/SL3/ECW PFA 50W is in use on Brentwood-area schools contracts.

GHA Coaches, Bettws

New is Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F S6 GHA. Acquisitions are Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/East Lancs H44/32F A279 ROW from Merseypride, Bootle and Leyland National 2 NL116HLXCT/1R/B49F A132 FDC ex-Northumbria. The Leyland National 2 has been in stock for some time, but has only recently entered service.

Go West, Kings Lynn

Dennis Dart SLD 9.8SDL3040/Marshall C37 DP31D M483 BEW is now in stock ex-Pathfinder of Newark. Ipswich Buses Optare Delta B44D L181 ADX has been on loan.

Go-Whittle

New Dennis Javelin/Plaxton Premiere GX are T615/31/8/45 XNP.

Dodge minis E138 EWP and E143 NWP are have been re-registered GBB 254, XKH 455 respectively, and Plaxton-bodied Dennis Javelins GBB 254 and XKH 455 to F244 SAB and F139 TWP.

Duple-bodied Dennis G29 HDW and Freight Rover Sherpa F116 TWP have been sold, as has Plaxton-bodied Dennis F903 RWP.

Greater County Travel, Benhall

Former Selkent Optare MetroRider/B26F H143/9 UUA are recent acquisitions.

Halton Transport

First Mainline Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer SPD B41F 516 (S516 UAK) has been on loan. Only two Leyland Lynx MkIs — 11 and 37 (H34 HBG, J250 KWM) — remain at work following the sale of 55/6 (G803 EKA, H542 FWM) to Merseyline Travel.

Happy Al's, Birkenhead

Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/East Lancs H43/31F A518/9 VKG are acquisitions from Cardiff.

Bristol VRT/SL3s 11, 23, 50 (PFC 511W, KJO 503/6W) are now XAZ 1371-3; Leyland Atlanteans 31/2/6-9 (WAG 371/2/69/75/80/2X) are now XAZ 1362-5/70; MCW Metroliner E255 UWR is now XAZ 1337 and Van Hool T815 integrals C426 VAY and C769 WKS from Windmill of Copford are now ALZ 4161, 1221.

Leyland National 2 42 (ALZ 6420, DBV 838W) has been sold to Norbus, Kirkby, Leyland Leopard UDW 640Y to Liverpool Motor Services of Aintree.

Hatton, St Helens

New is Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer MPD B26F T310 MBU.

Haynes, Hingham

Now added to stock is DAF DE02GSSB220/Plaxton DP40F R93 GNW and DE02LTSB220/Ikarus B41F M764 RCP.

Head, Luton

A unique vehicle owned here is front-engined Volvo B57/Alexander Y B51F XSA 5Y, new to Alexander Northern in 1983.

Heddingham Omnibuses

Acquisitions are Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Premiere 320 C53F L298 (N667 THO, XEL 24) and L299 (P395 AAA, A12 XEL) from Excelsior of Bournemouth, bringing the tally of this type from this source to six; youthful Volvo B10BLE/Alexander ALX300 B44F ex-demonstrator L301 (S376 MVP); Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW CO43/31F L302 (UWV 615S), for Clacton depot.

First Northampton is acquiring Alexander-bodied Metrobuses from First Leicester. 268 (BLS 432Y), seen in April at St Giles Park on a service usually run by low-floor single-deckers, was new to Midland Scottish.

JOHN YOUNG



Now withdrawn are Iveco 49.10 L149 (E79 HVX) and Leyland Leopard PSU5C/4R L221 (229 LRB, VAS 5897) both passed to Partridge of Hadleigh, Suffolk, the latter having come from Partridge four and a half years ago. Previously-withdrawn Leopard L276 (LUA 289V) is to be cannibalised for spares.

Holmeswood Coaches/Bostocks, Congelton

New Scania L94/Irizar C38Ft S4 HWD is at work.

Hulleys, Baslow

An interesting acquisition from Nottingham City is Leyland Atlantean AN68/1R/East Lancs Sprint B45F rebody 55 (OTO 555M) which originally carried an East Lancs H47/30D body. It is now re-registered RAU 804M (OTO 555M passing back to Nottingham) and carries South Notts livery, adopted as standard here. It joins former Nottingham stablemate Leyland National 2s LRB 214W, RRA 218/222X and Leyland Fleetline SCH 117X.

Another acquisition is ex-Stagecoach Midland Red Leyland National 2 NL116L11/1R/B52F NLS 985W, now in service numbered 15. Former Stagecoach Midland Red Leyland National 2 BVP 814V has recently been fitted with a new engine by Hardwick, Barnsley (dealer), during which time Leyland National 2 SVV 589W was on loan to cover, but continued troubles have caused its disposal.

Duple Dominant-bodied Leyland Tiger CKC 627X has been withdrawn and passed to Hardwick, Carlton (dealer). Freight Rover Sherpa 21 (D571 VBV) is now with North of Orton Longueville.

Huntingdon & District BL

New is Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer S302 APP, wearing Cambridgeshire Key Route livery for service 332 (Chatteris-Huntingdon). Volvo B6/Alexander Dash 629 (M429 BNV) is also in Cambridgeshire Key Route livery.

Huxley, Thrapwood

MCW Metrorider E602 HTF is in stock from Reading Buses, Leyland National NOE 553R from Stagecoach Midland Red, also Leyland National 2 NLS 987W.

Independent, Horsforth

The remaining ex-British Airways Plaxton Bustler-bodied Scania 115-9 (C930-2/5/6 VLB) have been advertised for sale.

Integrated Transport Group, North Anston

Bristol VRT/SL3 XAK 908T has been on loan to Aston Express. Former Crosville (naturally!) Bristol SC4LK/ECW coach CSG633 (194 KFM) is reported in heritage stock here ex-Gorman of Dunoon, for restoration by August this year.

Former Eastern National Bristol FLF6G 97 TVX has been noted at North Anston, along with also ex-Eastern National Bristol REL6G FWC 439H, ex-Nottingham Daimler Fleetline MNU 185P, Tyne & Wear Leyland Atlantean MVK 544R and Hull Atlantean TKH 265H.

Ipswich Buses

Acquisitions from London Traveller are Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1RH/ECW H42/26D 45-47 (C100/1 CHM, D138 FYM).

Isle Coaches, Owston Ferry

Leyland National 2 KWA 22W is now being prepared for use here, whilst former London/Black Prince Volvo Ailsa B55-10 MkIIl A102 SUU is having its fully-automatic gearchange replaced by semi-automatic and its Alexander H47/31D bodywork is also to be converted to single-door.

Jones, Llanfaethlu

Mercedes-Benz O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 S31 UEY is new and wears the new allover green livery.

Keighley & District BL

The new saloons are Volvo B10BLE/Wright Renown DP47F 540-51 (T540-51 AUA) for service 662 (Keighley-Bradford) branded as 'The Airedale Shuttle'. Leyland Lynxes 201/3 (G293/5 KWY) and Olympians 350/8/9/62-5/88 (FUM 485/3/4/93/7, 500Y, A92 KWWW, FUM 496Y) have been withdrawn, the Olympians being placed in store at Starbeck.

Kings Coaches, Stanway

Jonckheere-bodied Volvo B9M C404 LRP has been withdrawn and sold.

Kirkby-Lonsdale Coach Hire, Hutton Roof

Mercedes-Benz 811D/Optare StarRider B33F H84 PTG is another acquisition from Silverwing of Bristol, 814D/Crystals C33F L89 EWO emanating from Courtney of Bracknell. Both were new to Bebb of Llantwit Fardre. Ford Transit 28 (C28 BPR) has been cannibalised and sold to Millhead Motors, Carnforth.

Lakeland, Hurst Green

A new delivery is Plaxton Cheetah-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814 T677 CCK.

Leon, Finningley

Recently-acquired Leyland Atlantean 154 (A730 LNC) is now in service. Fleetlines 124/6 (NOC 465R, SDA 561S) have been withdrawn and sold, the cannibalised remains of similar 125 (NOC 391R) having passed to North, Sherburn-in-Elmet (dealer).

Liverpool Motor Services, Aintree

Leyland Leopard/ECW C53F UDW 640Y (AAX 528A, PKG 104Y) is in stock from Aintree Coachlines.

Leyland Atlantean 93 (A680 HNB) has passed to UK North, Manchester. Former Merseypride Optare Excel 88 (R88 MMS) has passed to Truronian.

London Central/London General GA

Marshall Minibuses ML1 and 3-5 (P501 HEG etc) are now back from loan to Limebourne, fire-damaged ML5 on paper only. National Greenway GLS463 (GUW 463W) has been re-registered with former Routemaster mark WLT 463, recently returned from sold MCW Metrobus M463 (WLT 463, GYE 463W) now with Blue Triangle and back to its original mark.

MCW Metrobuses M257 and 779 (BYX 257V, KYV 779X) have been sold to unconfirmed buyers, whilst Leyland Titans T864/87/98 and 908 (A864 SUL, A887/98, 908 SYE) have been sold, rather than loaned, to Blue Triangle.

London Traveller, Neasden

Two further new double-deckers, with East Lancs Lolyne bodywork, are reported on order for delivery in October this year.

Former Travel West Midlands MCW Metrobuses GOG 233/45W have been in use still in blue/silver, Leyland National TUG 813R in Yorkshire Terrier livery further adding colour here (although its status remains to be confirmed). Allover white Caetano-bodied Volvo B6R 405 (K705 RNR) is also at work.

Former London Central Leyland Olympians C100/1 CHM and D138 FYM have quickly moved on to Ipswich Buses.

London United/Westlink

MCW Metroriders MRL81 and 83 (F185/7 YDA) have been withdrawn and MRL82 (F186 YDA) has been sold to Optional Bus of Leeds.

Lyles, Batley

Leyland National 2 NL116L11/1R/B52F HHH 372V is an acquisition from Ribble. Duple-bodied DAF C107 RJR (C774 MVH) has been sold.

Lyles, Dewsbury

Leyland Atlantean AN68D/1R/East Lancs DPH43/27F SND 27X is now in stock ex-Rossendale.

Maun Crusader, Mansfield

Former Stagecoach Transit Dennis Dominator DD906/Northern Counties H42/31F A211 EHN and DDA1007/East Lancs DPH43/28F C114 CAT are now in stock.

Former Chesterfield Daimler Fleetline NNU 124M has been sold for preservation. Leyland Atlantean JKW 322/35W have been cannibalised for spares, the latter to aid preserved JKW 331W.

Mayne, Manchester

Six East Lancs Lolyne-bodied Dennis Tridents are on order. Bova FHD 58 (IIL 2258, G58 SBA) has been withdrawn and sold to Mossley, South Elmsall (dealer), Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger 78 (LIB 6438, C348 YBA) to Scania, Workop (dealer).

Merseyline, Garston

Leyland Lynx/B51F H542 FWM is another in stock from Halton. All former West Midlands Leyland Fleetlines have been withdrawn, SDA 565S passing to Merseypride Travel of Speke, SDA 712S and WDA 672T to Aintree Coachline, Bootle.

Metroline

Dennis Trident TP1 is being used by Dennis for demonstration purposes and has not yet been taken into stock.

The 16 Alexander ALX400-bodied Dennis Tridents due for Cricklewood's route 16 are expected for late-May delivery as TA66-81. A further fleet of 36 more Trident double-deckers are now on order for routes 140 and 182 for LT contracts commencing in September. Ten dual-door Plaxton Pointer-bodied SLFs are also due for route 232 in July, with six further Pointer SLFs for route H14 for September this year.

Displaced AV-class Olympians from Cricklewood are to move over to Willesden to oust Metrobuses from route 260. Two AVs will go to the Cricklewood Contract Services fleet, chiefly to operate Contract Routes E932 and E933 there.

The saga of the unwanted LN-class Northern Counties-bodied Dennis Lances continues, as they have now been rejected by First Provincial, LN29 (K329 YJA) being returned after trials and deemed unsuitable. New in 1993, this class remains substantially unsold over a year after early withdrawal during 1997.

MCW Metrobuses withdrawn are M84, 102/9/26 and 380 (WYW 84T, BYX 102/9/26V, GYE 380W). M126 and M989 (BYX 126V, A989 SYF) have passed to PVS, Barnsley (dealer); M160 and M616 (BYX 160V, KYO 616X) to Blue Triangle, Rainham; M563 (GYE 563W) to Sullivan Bus & Coach and M674 (KYV 674X) to Nash, Enfield (dealer) for scrap.

MK Metro

Further Optare Solo M850/B31F are 5-10 (T405-10 ENV), all in standard fleet livery. An interesting arrival is MCW Metrobus/Alexander RH H45/31F 258 (DEM 758Y) ex-Classic, Annfield Plain, via a very short spell with Go North East (unused).

More Mercedes-Benz L608Ds retired are 08, 14 and 34 (D108 VRP etc). Of the original fleet, only 01, 02, 29 and 77 (D101 VRP etc) remain. 01 is earmarked for local preservation upon retirement. Plaxton-bodied Dennis Dart 401 (M801 QJW) has been withdrawn and sold to Burtons of Haverhill.

MTL North

The first of the many Marshall B36F-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs due are 7601-11 (T601-11 JBA). These are at Gilmooss on services 135/235 (Aintree-Bootle), 231-234 (Maghull circulars) and 215/216 (Walton-Croxeth). New gas-fuelled Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer SPDs for Southport Park & Ride services are 6248-51 (S248-51 KVR).

Neoplan N4016 saloons 6402-13 (L402-10 TKB, L411/2 UFY, L413 TKB) are being repainted in fleet livery for service 18 (City-Croxeth). The last vehicle in Heysham Travel green/yellow livery is Leyland Leopard 6129 (GSG 129T).

Leyland Titan 2299 (KYN 299X) became deroofed at Roan Bridge whilst running out of service and been withdrawn. Also withdrawn are Leyland Atlanteans 1313 (DKC 313L), 1890 (XEM 890W), 1912/67/8 (XEM 912W, ACM 767/8X), Leyland Titans 2155/95 (CUL 155/95V) and Leyland National 2 6107 (VBG 107V). Atlanteans 1913/40/52/60 (ACM 713X etc) and Titan 2129 (CUL 129V) have passed to Whiting, Ferrybridge (dealer), Titan 2084 (CUL 84V) to Goodwin, Carlton and Leyland National 2 (UEM 37V) to Power Systems of Cleveland.

Mulley's, Ixworth

Scania K113CRB/Jonckheere C57F A19, 20 HWD are acquisitions from Holmeswood Coaches and wear Bostocks of Congleton livery.

Nip-On, St Helens

New Dennis Dart SLF/Marshall B26F T310 MBU has allowed East Lancs-bodied Dennis Dart R90 MMS to go to a dealer.

Norbus, Kirkby

Leyland National 2 ALZ 6420 (*DBV 838W*) is now in stock ex-Happy A1's. Leyland Nationals PTF 732L, AKU 110/64T and JTU 581T were withdrawn last year, but remain on-site.

North Surrey Buses

Former London Coaches East Lancs-bodied Leyland Olympian coach SIB 3275 (*C202 DYE*) is in poor condition with vandal damage, and is expected to be used as a source of spare parts for WLT 649 (*C201 DYE*).

Acquisitions are Bristol VRT/SL3 VCA 455W from Arriva North West and Leyland National THX 150S from London United.

Nostalgibus, Mitcham

Routemaster coach RCL2239 (CUV 239C) is in stock ex-Blue Triangle, Rainham.

Group codes	
AA	— Arriva Passenger Services
BL	— Blaze field Holdings
EY	— EYMS Group
FG	— FirstGroup
GA	— Go-Ahead Group
NX	— National Express
ST	— Stagecoach Holdings
YT	— Yorkshire Traction

Nottingham City Transport

Dennis Trident/East Lancs Lolyne H53/35F 405/7-9/12 (T405 BNN etc) are now in service. A total of 32 of these high-capacity low-floor double-deckers is reported due, in batches as 405-16, 417-26 and 427-36, 405/6 being pre-production examples. Optare Solos also placed in service are 292/4-6 (T294 BNN etc). To confirm, recent Volvo Olympians are 450-65 (S450-65 ATV).

Acquired ex-Chester Leyland Lion 396 (E941 CDS) is also now at work. Leyland Atlantean AN68C/1R/Northern Counties 411-6 (MVO 411-6W) have renumbered 911-6, to vacate fleetnumbers 411-6 for new Tridents. The last secondhand Leyland National 2 19 (ETT 319Y) is also renumbered 712; all Nationals are now in the block 711-24.

Scania/Wright Access Fioline demonstrator S350 SET has been in use, carrying fleetnumber 950. Leyland Atlantean Sprint saloon 55 (OTO 555M) has been withdrawn and sold to Hulleys of Baslow.

Optional Bus, Horsforth

Leyland National 1593 (JTU 593T) has passed to Shuttle Buses of Kilwinning.

Pandh Travel Club, Wallasey

Leyland Atlantean ONF 653R is in stock from Aintree Coachlines, ANA 585Y and DDK 26W from Rossendale, TOS 968X from First Glasgow whilst Leyland National FPR 61V has come from Wilts & Dorset, MCW Metrorider 170 BHR (D741 ALR) also from Rossendale.

Atlantean YNL 218V has been withdrawn as a result of roof damage, Metrorider E26 GCK with engine failure.

Pats Coaches, Gatewen

Freight Rover Sherpa/Carlyle B20F E180 TWO is now in stock ex-Acton Coaches, Wrexham, route-branded for use on the Town Link service previously operated by GHA Coaches. Mercedes-Benz 811D/Optare StarRider B31F G122 SMV is a reserve to the Sherpa and appears on contract and works duties.

PC Coaches, Lincoln

Former Arriva Midland Fox Alexander-bodied MCW Metrobus CKS 390X and ULS 615S are in stock, along with MCW-bodied Metrobuses EWF 488V and JHE 177W new to South Yorks.

Pilkington, Accrington

Acquisitions feature strongly this month with the arrival of uncommon Dennis Falcon H/East Lancs DP43F B51 XFV from Arriva Manchester, Leyland National 2 NL116HLXB/1R/B52F WAO 398Y from Cumberland, whilst from Arriva North West come Leyland National 10351/1R/B41F MIL 5581 (LPB 209P), 10351A/2R/B44F BYW 203V, 11351A/1R/B49F PIL 7012 (GMB 386T) and Leyland National 2 NL116AL11/2R/B52F PIL 7013, NL106AL11/B44F PIL 9541 (LFR 869X), PIL 9546 (LFR 867X). First numbered are 12, 13, 41 and 46 (PIL 7012/3, 9541/6).

Poppleton, Pontefract

An uncommon addition here is Dennis Dorchester SDA802/Wadham Stringer B59F FOD 942Y and also Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2R/Duple Dominant B55F B877 OLJ, both from Tillingbourne.

Preston Bus

Mauve-liveried Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer MPD demonstrator S451 WAT has been in use on the Riversway Park & Ride service, along with blue-liveried Optare Solo T343 FWR. An order for 12 new minibuses is expected to be placed shortly.

A new fleet livery is being devised in advance of the delivery of new Dennis Tridents. Leyland Olympian 107 (J107 KCW) is in an attractive scheme featuring two shades of blue, along with much deeper cream than used hitherto. The roof and upper deck window surrounds are finished in a shade of blue quoted as being 'Stagecoach blue', the same shade being used on lower panelling below the lower saloon windows. A much darker 'Royal Blue' skirt is used, separated by a stripe of deep cream (originally yellow, but changed to cream prior to entry into service). A new fleetname has also appeared on this, with 'Preston Bus' in upper and lower case in deep cream on blue panelling, with 'Proud to serve Preston' in dark blue. The Preston Borough coat of arms features alongside these, and blue front/rear Preston Bus fleetnames. 106 (J976 PRW) is next to be repainted, but is to receive the previous standard layout but with deeper cream. After this, 114 (J114 KCW) is to don another experimental livery, yet to be revealed. The adopted style will then be applied to the new Tridents, the Olympian fleet, all Leyland Lynxes and minibuses due to be ordered. Leyland Atlanteans will not be given the new scheme however.

Renault S56 42 (D42 AFV) has passed to Andrews of Hexham, 44 (E44 FFV) to Greehill Plant Hire, Southall.

Priory Coaches, Gosport

Bristol VRT/SL2 GKL 827N has been withdrawn and sold to Brian Coaches, Bishops Waltham and VRT/SL3 PHY 695S has been broken up.

Reading Buses

Metrobus/MCW H45/28D 193 (LMO 193X) is now single door (H45/28F), and another is to follow.

Metrobus 166 (CJH 166V) is being cannibalised. VW LT55 CityPacers 214/9 (D939 KNW, E557 GFR) have passed back to Optare, Leeds as dealer. 219 was the last of its type here. MCW Metroriders 601-4 (E601-4 HTF) have passed to Motor Trade of Eccleshall, 605 (E605 HTF) passing to Warminster.

Reading Mainline

Three Routemasters are to be fitted with 11.3 litre AEC engines to enhance hill-climbing ability. Nos 1-3, 5, 13, 15, 17, 21/7-9 and 40 (ALM 34B, WLT 993, XVS 319, WLT 937, WTS 186A, WVS 423, 859 DYE, CUV 201C, WTS 102A, XSL 220A, ALD 948B, WLT 848) have been withdrawn and are for sale. An unconfirmed report shows ex-Southeast Nos 1, 3 and 5 sold to International Coachlines, London. Privately-owned No.31 (WLT 938) is apparently not expected to return to service here after its trip to the Czech Republic, in June. The Routemaster repatriated from Egypt dubbed 'Nile 1' is being dismantled.

Redline, Penwortham

A new delivery is Scania L94/irizar C49Ft T9 RED.

Acquisitions are Bristol VRT/SL36LXB/ECW H43/31F LFJ 668W from Tims of Sheerness, along with a DAF SB3000/Van Hool C51Ft from Dewar of Falkirk, which has been re-registered 14 RED.

Red Rose, Aylesbury

Iveco 49.10 M848 MOL caught fire on service 71 at Billington and is written off.

Ringwood, Staveley

Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver C14FL S743 RNE is on long-term loan from Mistral Bus & Coach Rentals and regularly works service X67 (Chesterfield-Manchester).

New O.814/Mellor DP31F S276 LGA is now route-branded for service X67.

RoadCar YT

Due imminently are new Dennis Dart SLF/East Lancs 513/4 for Skegness (and for transfer to Lincoln in the autumn); with 515-21 to follow, of which five will go to Grantham for Alma Park services and the others at Lincoln. Also on order are new 8.8m Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer MPDs as 591-5 for autumn delivery, to allow conversion of all Newark town services to low-floor. A further two Leyland Olympians are also due from Strathay as 625/7 (TSO 25/7X).

New deliveries should see the eradication of the last 15 Dodge S56s in service (and the pair held delicensed).

New Wright Access Fioline-bodied Scania L94UBs 801-3 (S801-3 SJV) carry route-branding for service 6 (Lincoln-Skegness).

Leyland Tiger/Plaxton Paramount C53F 421 (KIB 6620) has been overhauled at Barnsley, losing much of its bright trim in the process as is common. It initially appeared downseated to C49F, but is now C51F with luggage pen, being received in allover white but now in dual-purpose livery.

East Lancs-bodied Leyland Olympians 642/4 (DFW 42X, KTL 44Y) have had their rear lower saloon windows panelled over, prior to recent repaint.

Leyland Leopards 1432/6/47 (XSG 72R, YSF 81S, GSO 87V) are now used for schools work, with indicator displays covered by 'School Bus' lettering. The last three native Bristol VRT/SL3s in stock, 1952/7/8 (LVL 807V, PFE 541/2V) were similarly treated and allocated, at Newark (1952) and Lincoln (1957/8), but 1952 is now available for normal service once more with indicator display restored.

Leyland National 2 NL116TL11/1R/B49F 220 (EDT 220V) is in stock from Yorkshire Traction.

Mercedes-Benz 709D 17 (E287 OMG) has been withdrawn and sold to Strathay; previously-withdrawn Dodge S56s 70 and 102/4 (D158 RAK, E502/4 HHN) have gone to J. McParlane, Co Down.

Rossendale Transport

Leyland Atlanteans 49 and 188 (STE 19S, JKW 288W) have been withdrawn and 28, 36, 37, 132/91/3 (SND 28X, CJK 36, 37V, ANA 217T, JKW 291/3W) and Volvo B10M-61s 319/21 (NIW 6519, RJI 8721) have been sold.

MCW Metrorider 390 (170 BHR) has passed to Pandh of Wallasey, which also has Leyland Atlantean 26 (DDK 26W) and 135 (ANA 585Y). Atlantean 27 (SND 27X) is now with R&N, Mirfield.

Safeguard, Guildford

Dennis Dart 9.8SDL/Northern Counties B40F M388 KVR and N611 WND are in stock, whilst Leyland Lynxes E297/8 OMG have been sold, interestingly to Wilts & Dorset.

School Transport Company, Widnes

Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Atlantean MNC 519W, Willowbrook-bodied Atlantean WWM 920W, Bristol VRT/SL3 AHU 520V and Dodge S56 D681 SEM are in stock. MNC 519W and D681 SEM are in blue/yellow livery, WWM 920W is in two-tone blue and AHU 520V is in yellow schoolbus paintwork.

Semmence, Wymondham

Dennis Javelin 12SDA2159/Berkhof Excellence 1000 C53F N817/2 XMO have been acquired from Dunn Line.

Shearings

New Volvo B10M-62s 101-32 (T101-10, 197, 112-20, 198, 122, 199, 124-32 JBA) are set to replace Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M-60s 210-2/5/7-21/3-9/41-5/7/9/55-9/61-8 (J210 NNC etc), 301/2 (SPR 124, YTP 749) and 477-85 (K477-9, 80, 481-5 VVR). New deliveries recorded are B10M-62/Van Hool C46Ft 101-16 and B10M-62/Jonckheere Mistral C50F 122/5/7/9/30.

Moseley, (dealer) has taken 239/41-5 (J239 NNC etc) (239/41 to the Glenmavis base and 243-5 the Elmsall base); C&S of Heathfield has 246/8/52/4 (J246 NNC etc) and Volvo of Loughborough has 258/9/66/8 (J258 NNC etc) and 478/80-5 (K478 VVR etc) plus Jonckheere-bodied B10M-62s 601/11/3/5-8/20/2/3-6/8-30 (M601/11/3/5-8/20/2/3/5 ORJ, M626 PVR, M628-30 KVVU). Van Hool Alizée-bodied B10M-62 675 (M675 MVU) has suffered fire damage and written off.

Skills, Nottingham

Three new Setras are expected imminently. Van Hool-bodied Volvo F812 TMD is now branded as the 'Seaside Shuttle', whilst similar BAZ 7901/17 and YXI 9258 have been painted allover unrelieved white in preparation for sale.

S&M, Benfleet

Bristol VRT/SL3 RUA 456W has been in operation, but has been replaced by older ex-Hams VR PJO 447P. Park Royal-bodied Daimler Fleetline GHV 59N has also been acquired, surprisingly perhaps as similar but newer Leyland Fleetlines KUC 969P and OUC 38R have been sold.

Sovereign Bus & Coach BL

The biggest order yet placed by Sovereign Buses (Harrow) and London Sovereign calls for 57 Dennis Dart SLFs with Plaxton Pointer 2 bodies

Springfield Coachways, Wigan

New Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs are S764-6 RNE, which are employed on former Arriva Manchester 'Easylink' services 664/674 at Wigan.

Stagecoach Burnley & Pendle ST

Inter-company transfers have seen the arrival of 788 (E88 HRN), 2097 (OSR 197R) and 2136 (CWR 526Y) from Ribble but the departure of 144 (L144 BFV), 344 (XRN 44V) and 2108 (JFR 8W) to Ribble.

Stagecoach Cambus ST

The last Bristol VRT/SL3 in service was 784 (RAH 264W), confined in its last weeks to covering other vehicle breakdowns. The company made this vehicle available along with freshly-painted 760 (KVF 250V), now at Peterborough, for a farewell tour on 31 January. Volvo Olympians 592/3 (S592/3 BCE) now carry Stagecoach Express vinyls and are used on services X55/X56 (Cambridge-Peterborough/Kings Lynn). Equally noteworthy is that AEC Reliance driver trainer 73 (SFL 373R) is now in Stagecoach livery in place of its previous unrelieved yellow.

Volvo B10M/Plaxton Premiere M889 WAK has been on loan from Kirkby, Anston (dealer). Optare MetroRider 975 (M975 WWR) is back in traffic after accident damage repairs, but 963 (K963 HUB) is awaiting repairs, 964/6/7 (K964 HUB etc) being stored in Reserve. 976-9 (M976-8 WWR, M959 VWY) have gone to Viscount at Peterborough.

Former Western Buses Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 201-6 (N614/5/7/9/41/13 VSS) have been withdrawn and sold to Cumberland, whilst Fleetlink of Liverpool (dealer) has bought VRs 739/47/70/5/7/81/4 (URP 943W, STW 24W, SUB 790W, PWY 45, 47W, VEX 301X, RAH 264W).

VR 791 (VEX 291X) has been sold to a dealer, whilst the last Ford Transit, 2036 (C336 SFL) unceremoniously departed on the back of a lorry.

Stagecoach Cumberland ST

East London Dennis Trident/Alexander ALX400 H51/22D S801 BWC has been on loan, interestingly carrying Stagecoach Manchester fleetnames and fleetnumber 801. It was not used and appeared only at Lilyhall depot.

The last Mercedes-Benz L608Ds are being replaced by former Cambus Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander B25F 200/2/5/6 (N6147/7/3/6 VSS). They retain these fleetnumbers. Unfortunately, this season all the open-toppers based at Windermere have lost their attractive green/cream 'Lakeland' livery in favour of overall advertising schemes.

Leyland Leopard/Duple Dominant II 1123 (HNE 253V) has been renumbered 1253.

Acquisitions are two former MoD Dodge G13s, now numbered 3006/7. 3006 has a Wadham Stringer B39F body and has been re-registered D513 VAO, 3007 is reported with a Reeve Burgess body and is re-registered A247 GAO. Both are downseated to B15F.

Two Volvo B10M-55/Alexander PS DPs have suffered severe accident damage recently, such that their futures are in doubt; 783 (K783 DAO) on service 555 near Carlisle and sister 788 (K788 DAO) on service X75 between Dumfries and Carlisle.

Stagecoach East London/Selkent ST

A new Alexander-bodied Dennis Trident has been destroyed by fire at Bus Painters Ltd of Kirkcaldy, but its identity has not yet been confirmed.

Leyland Olympian L30 (C30 CHM) is now back from loan to Oxford. L114 (C114 CHM) has been converted to H42/29F layout and outshopped in corporate livery. Just a few Routemasters have continued to appear on route 8 on Sundays — these are the only non-sightseeing Routemasters in London on Sundays.

Stagecoach East Midland ST

Ten Alexander ALX200-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs are due for Mansfield, which will lose 18 Alexander Dash-bodied Volvo B6s for transfer elsewhere as Leyland National 2 replacements. Six new Volvo B10M-62s are due for National Express and Virgin Rail Link work, three to replace B10Ms 644-6 (J430/9/50 HDS). Further Leyland National 2s are to be replaced by eight Plaxton-bodied Darts from East London stock too.

A further ex-MoD Dodge Commando G013/Wadham Stringer acquired from Eastwood of Birmingham (dealer) is 1027 (D953 TWE), allocated to Stonegravels and converted to B14F for its new purpose. Accident-damaged Leyland National 2 30 (OWB 30X) has gone to PVS, Carlton (dealer) for scrap.

Leyland Olympian 299 (TWF 201Y) is back in service after low-bridge accident repairs. Less fortunate 313 (UDT 313Y) has been decapitated at Sheepbridge Lane, Mansfield and is withdrawn.

Volvo B10M 660 (KSU 463) has passed to Transit (at Hull).

Stagecoach Grimsby-Cleethorpes ST

Sixteen Alexander ALX400-bodied Dennis Tridents are reported on order, which will then allow Alexander-bodied Volvo Olympians 130-44 (N130-44 AET) to be transferred to Chesterfield (in turn, allowing earlier Leyland Olympians to be withdrawn). Dennis Falcon 233 (EJV 33Y) has been withdrawn.

Stagecoach Manchester ST

The first Dennis Tridents for a Stagecoach company arrived in May. The first was 613 (T613 MNF), which came on 11 May followed two days later by 612 (T612 MNF). They have Alexander ALX400 DPH47/27F bodywork and a further 11 are due, 601-11. The are allocated to Stockport.

MAN 18.220/Alexander ALX200 B42F saloons 148-54/6-9 carry Manchester Skyline route-branding for services to Manchester Airport. Delivery of a further 50 is due to start imminently; the next 33 will be 160-9/72-4/8-97 (T160 MVM etc; there will be no 170/1/5-7.

Further ex-Kenya Bus Dennis Dragon DDA1820/Metsec-AVA H51/37F placed in service are 690/1/4 (M690/1/4 TDB). Ex-MoD Dodge G13/Wadham Stringer B39F acquired for training are TV15, TV16 (80-KF-54, 93-KF-41).

Vehicles taken into stock from Glossopdale are Mercedes-Benz minibuses 431 (H881 NFS), a 15-seat 410D/Crystals; 811D/Marshall B31F 432 (M634 FJF); 711D/Marshall B27F 433/4 (N746/8 YVR); Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 B31F 567-70 (R276/7 CBU, R446/7 YNF) and B27F 571-3 (R898/9, 901 AVM) and Dennis Dart 9.8SDL/Marshall B40F 608/9 (M85/6 DEV). All are in Stagecoach livery. Volvo B6LE 337 (P337 JND) is back from loan to Glossopdale.

Leyland Nationals 255/6/67 lost Campus Link vinyls recently and are now employed on Magic Bus services 142/143; also in Magicbus livery are Olympians 3058/60/5/7/9/70.

Withdrawn are Leyland Olympian 3117 (B117 TVU) following a low-bridge accident, Atlanteans 4660 (A660 HNB), 4743/9/61 (A743 NNA etc), and Bristol LH6L driver trainer TV10 (REU 316S). MCW Metrobus 5040/8/55 (MRJ 40/8, 55W) and 5120/58/73 (SND 120X, ANA 158/73Y) were reinstated briefly at Princess Road; however 5048/55, 5120 are on loan to Stagecoach Midland Red, and the other three are in reserve. Volvo B10Ms 829-36 (P829-35 FVU, P836 GND) have gone to Stagecoach South; Renault Dodge S75 1721 (H721 CNC) to Barlow, Darwen, 1726-8 (H726-8 FNC) to Sherratt, Cold Meece.

Stagecoach Midland Red ST

Recent inter-company transfers in summary are of Volvo B10M-60/Plaxton Premiere 350 C49FT 44, 45 (J446/5 HDS) at Rugby and from United Counties; B10M-55/Alexander PS B49F 229-32 (P567-60 ESA) at Stratford-upon-Avon and from Glasgow, similar 233-43/6 (N803-13/6 DNE), 233-42 at Rugby, 243/6 at Leamington Spa and from Manchester; Volvo B6LE/Alexander ALX200 B39F 457-61 (P361-5 DSA) from Glasgow and 462-71 (P352-7/29/50/1 JND) from Manchester all at Nuneaton; Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties DPH45/31F 909/21/2 (N519/8/20 XER) at Leamington and from Cambus, Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/ECW H45/32F 908 (TSO 13X) from Northern along with pre-production B45/ECW H45/32F 913 (OMS 910W), also from Northern. New Volvo Olympian/Alexander RL H51/36F 914-20 (S914-20 ANH) are also at Leamington.

Recent withdrawals are of Leyland Tigers 2, 90 (A76 NAC, 552 OHU); Leyland Leopards 4-6, 16, 18 and 29 (RNV 445V, 3273 AC, BVP 788V; 230 HUE; 331 HWD; YBO 16, 18Y; NAK 29X); Tigers 74, 75 (4828, 9737 VC), re-registered back to original marks C211/2 PPE; Leyland Nationals 503/4/71/78/82/6/7/95/8 and 1053 (JOX 503/4P, NOE 571/7/8/82/6/7R, GOL 426N, KHT 124P, PIB 8019); Leyland National 2s 807/13/5 (RFS 579V, YFS 304W, RRM 383X); Iveco 49.10s 821-30 (K521-30 EFL); Bristol VRT/SL3s 932/6/44 (CBV 16S, ONH 846P, HUD 475S) and Leyland Atlanteans 974-7/80/2/5/7 (VCU 301/10T, AVK 172V, EJR 106W, AVK 181/74/6/74/40V).

Disposals are of Tigers 2 and 90 to Wacton, Bromyard (dealer) and 74, 75 to Stagecoach Oxford; previously withdrawn Mercedes-Benz minis 300/26-8/76/7 (E433 YHL, L326-8 YKV, F313 EJO, E829 ATT) have passed to Stagecoach Oxford, 376 thus returning home.

Stagecoach Red & White ST

Dennis Dart 8.5SDL3015/Wright Handybus B29F 464/7 (NDZ 3134/7) are now in stock from East London.

Correcting earlier notes, withdrawals are of penultimate Bristol RE 391 (GHB 146N), the final Leyland National 2, 512 (RSG 824V) and Leyland Leopard coach 973 (GGM 71W). The last of the ex-Cynon Valley Bristol RESL6L/ECW B44F saloons is now 392 (HTG 354N), but this is due for early withdrawal. All the company's towing vehicles have also been withdrawn, including Willowbrook-bodied Leopards TKG 518J new to Western Welsh and BTX 332J new to Rhondda.

Stagecoach Ribble ST

Northern Counties H43/30F-bodied Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R B137 WNB, B150 XNA and ONLXB/1R/Northern Counties DPH43/27F B139 WNB were acquired from Stagecoach Manchester and numbered 2147/50/39 respectively. However they soon went back to Manchester, so former Stagecoach Manchester Olympian ONTL11/1R/Northern Counties H43/30F ANA 1-3Y are now 2147/9/50.

Inter-company transfers have seen the arrival of 144 (L144 BFV), 344 (XRN 44V) and 2108 (JFR 8W) from Burnley & Pendle and the departure of 788 (E88 HRN), 2074/97 (FFR 174S, OSR 197R) and 2136 (CWR 526Y) to Burnley.

Disposals are of Dennis Javelin 143 (L143 BFV) to Stagecoach North West; AEC Routemaster 702 (WSK 219, WLT 528) and Leyland Swift 295 (G767 CDU), Mercedes-Benz 811D 796 (G96 MRN), Leyland National 2s 815/33/5/48 (YRN 815V, DBV 833/5W, JCK 848W), Leyland Leopard 1042 (DBV 42W), Volvo B10M-60s 1122/4 (J122/4 AHH) to Fleetlink, Mossley Hill (dealer). Previously-withdrawn Leyland National 2s 820 (YRN 820V), 908 (RFS 582V), Leyland Leopard 1040 (DBV 40W), Leyland Atlanteans 1202/3 (FVR 294V, RGV 39W) and 1478/80 (TRN 478/80V) and Bristol VRTs 2021/40/67/93/6/8 (CBV 21S, FDV 813S, FFR 167S, OSR 193/6, 205R) have all been disposed of too.

Stagecoach Transit ST

New deliveries are of MAN 18.220HOC/LAlexander ALX300 B42F 656-65 (T656-65 OEF) at Stockton and similar 727-35 (T727-35 OEF) at Hull, the latter with 'Streetsurfer' branding.

Dennis Dart SLFs 462-7 (R462-7 SEF) are reallocated to Hartlepool from Stockton, replaced by the new MANs. Leyland Fleetlines 141/9 (JAJ 141W, PEF 149X) are reinstated at Darlington, Mercedes-Benz 811Ds 303/10 (HDZ 2603/10) transferred to Stockton from Darlington, and Leyland Lynx 609 (F609 UVN) is at Hartlepool.

Many Dennis Dominators have now been withdrawn; Alexander-bodied 206/8/9 (B106 UAT etc), Northern Counties-bodied 215-8 (B215-8 OAJ), 908/9/13 (A208/9 EHN, A213 FVN) and East Lancs-bodied 211/2/23/6/8/9 (C111 CAT etc), 233-9/41 (E133 SAT etc) and 253-7 (F153-7 HAT). 253-7 (also 252) unusually have Cummins L10 engines. 210 (B110 UAT) has had a reprieve because of its overall advertisement and 247 (E147 BKH) has also been reinstated, leaving just 13 examples left in Hull — 210/32/40/2-51 (B110 UAT, E231/40 SAT, F142-51 BKH). 232 is the dedicated 'Ferry Bus'.

Leyland Swift coach 31 (H71 XKH) has finally entered service in Hartlepool, and Volvo B10M coach 32 (J422 HDS) is expected in use in May. These have prompted the withdrawal of Dennis Dorchester 42 (BUT 42Y).

Other withdrawals are of Scania N113DRBs 800-8 (C100 HSJ, G801-6 JRH, G807/8 LAG), leaving only seven double-deck Scania here — 809-16 (H809-16 WKH). These, too, will go upon receipt of the last eight acquired Olympians.

The era of Leyland National operation is now over, consequent upon the withdrawal of Leyland National 2s 515/6/9 (KAJ 215/6/9W), replaced by the Darts from Stockton. Rare dual-door Wadham Stringer-bodied Dennis Falcons 521/3/5 (YDC 21/3/5Y) have also been withdrawn, along with equally uncommon Northern Counties-bodied 527/9 (B27/9 PAJ).

Also recently withdrawn have been Leyland Leopard 34 (FSL 62W), Leyland Fleetlines 131/3/5/47/51/2/4/5 (GAJ 131/3/5V, PEF 147X, VEF 151/2/4/5Y), and Mercedes-Benz 811D 321 (F621 XMS).

Stagecoach United Counties ST

The Leyland Titan has now arrived in some quantity here, with TNLXB2RR/Leyland H44/27F 801-7/9/11 (NUW 553/4/6/7/9/69/76/84/90Y), all at Corby. Notwithstanding these Bristol VRT/SL3s 849 and 915 (OVV 849R, HBD 915T) were reinstated for just a few weeks in March and April at Bedford.

Mercedes-Benz 709D 370 (L370 JBD) is in the latest DeMontfort University livery.

Withdrawals are of Leyland Tiger 81 (WLT 682), Leyland National 2s 500/1 (LFR 862/4X) and further VRTs in the shape of 721/35/9 (LFJ 862/4/9W), 849 (OVV 849R) and 949/70/1/3 (VVV 949W, KRU 843/5/7W). Tiger 81 is now re-registered C81 PRP.

Tigers 81 and 116 (C81 PRP, B357 KNH) and Routemaster 710 (HVS 935) have been sold to Lister, Bolton (dealer); VR 740 (FDV 832V) to Fleetmaster Bus & Coach, Billingshurst; Routemaster 708 (CUV 192C) to PVS, Barnsley (dealer); VR 862 (RRP 862R) to Ripley, Cudworth (dealer) and Leyland Fleetline 980 (GAJ 125V) to Shorey's Travel & Transport, Maulden.

Stagecoach Viscount ST

Bristol VRT/SL3 796 (KVF 246V) has been painted out of Peterborough Bus Company red/cream and so the withdrawal of PBC-liveried 775 (PWY 45W) means this livery is now extinct.

Volvo B10Ms 442-4 (J742-4 CWT) are now removed from National Express duties and are reliveried in corporate colours for use on Stagecoach Express work.

Stephenson, Rochford

Convertible open-top VRs VHB 677/8S are both in operation on Southend's seafrost service 67 this summer. This is extended to a two-bus operation back to its former Highlands (Thames Drive)-Shoeburyness (East Beach) full length — more correctly numbered 68 traditionally.

Group codes	
AA	Arriva
Passenger Services	
BL	Blazefield
Holdings	
EY	EYMS Group
FG	FirstGroup
GA	Go-Ahead
Group	
NX	National
Express	
ST	Stagecoach
Holdings	
YT	Yorkshire
Traction	

On the first morning (15 May) ex-Eastern National 1953 Bristol KSW5G 2380 (WNO 478) was brought out of retirement to operate scheduled service for the first time since July 1970 (when it was one of the first to be taken off service). Present and in service offering free rides as well was 1963 former coach Bristol FLF6B(6G) open-topper 2300 (RWC 608) and 10.54 at Thames Drive saw the unique gathering of Bristols KSW, FLF and VRT all on service together.

VHB 678S has been outshopped in cream and black with coach wheeltrims; by contrast, a tired and dowdy VHB 677S entered service in 'as withdrawn' Northern Bus livery, but appeared a week later looking immaculate in fleet livery.

Closed-top VRs MFA 719V, GGM 109W, NEH 724/6W and VEX 292X are presently at work here.

Supreme Coach & Travel, Hadleigh (Essex)

Another ex-Manchester MCW Metrobus is ANA 154Y, whilst ANA 153/63Y are confirmed in stock.

Supertravel, Speke

Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 S8-10 STM are in use on Merseytravel service 222 (City Centre-Mersey Ferries), previously operated by MTL using Neoplans 7301-3.

TM Travel, Old Tupton

Leyland Tiger/Plaxton Paramount 3500 C53F H706 EOD is in stock ex-Loverings of Coombe Martin and in National Holidays livery; Volvo B10M/Plaxton Paramount 3500 C49Ft G53 RGG is ex-Johnson, Hodthorpe and is in dealer stock white. B10M/Plaxton Premiere C48Ft J717 EUA (WA 3399, J721 CWT) has come from Wallace Arnold.

Refurbished Optare MetroRider/DP31F H157 UUA has been acquired from London Central; Mercedes-Benz 811D/Optare StarRider B31F F925 YWY was on loan prior to receipt of the MetroRider.

Former Preston Leyland Atlantean CRN 124S has been withdrawn and sold for preservation after operating a farewell tour.

Timeline, Leigh

Neoplan-bodied Dennis Javelins 909-11 (M909-11 OVR) have passed to Dawson Rentals of Milton Keynes (dealer).

Travel London NX

Fleetnumbers are now allocated here, matching vehicles' registration numbers. The Optare Solos are 231-40 (S231-40 EWU) and Optare Excels 401-5/7-22 (R401 HWU etc).

Travelrich International, Clacton

The first Neoplan Starliner N516SHD/C44Ft for a UK operator is in service here as T855 JWB. It won Coach of the Year at the Brighton Coach Rally.

Neoplan Cityliner N116/3/C48Ft N577 AWJ is an acquisition from Parry of Cheslyn Hay. Cityliner UGV 84T (L977 MWB) has been sold.

Trent Buses

New arrivals are Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer 945-9 (T945-9 BNN) in Barton stock and based at Ilkeston.

Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814s 292/3 (S292/3 UAL) now carry route-branding for the new Heanor-Derby Direct service, which started this April. Similar 284 (R284 LNU) has lost its green 'Hilton Flyer' livery in favour of standard Trent livery.

Leyland Nationals 458/81/96 and 523 (PRR 458R, XAL 481/96S, FRA 523V) have been added to the Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire fleet, 496 and 523 now reliveried in green and blue with Blue Apple fleetnames added. 520 (FRA 520V) is now also in N&D green/blue after having operated since transfer from Barton in red and cream. Leyland National 568 (DAR 120T) now carries Barton fleetnames.

Volvo B10M-55 55 (M455 TCH) is the last of its batch to gain two-tone green/white 'TransPeak' livery for the Nottingham-Manchester service.

Optare MetroRider 215 (N215 VRC) has been delicensed.

A notable withdrawal — the first of its type in the country — is Optare Sigma 354 (M354 PRA). Other withdrawals are of 454/66/7/93 and 536 (PRR 454R, RTO 466R, URB 467S, XAL 493S, CWX 656T). Leyland National 513 (ACH 513T) has also been withdrawn from the Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire fleet.

Volvo Citybuses 619/20 (G619/20 OTV) are now with Burtons of Haverhill, Leyland National 563 (NOE 585R) with Looms of Spondon, but the hulks of cannibalised Leyland Nationals 438/41/3/83 (PRR 438/41/3R, XAL 483S) have gone to PVS, Barnsley (dealer).

Viceroy, Saffron Walden

Interesting acquisitions from Stephenson of Rochford are Leyland Atlantean AN68/2R/East Lancs EL2000 B46F rebody HIL 4346/9 (SUG 561/95M), new to Leeds City with Roe H45/33D bodywork. They are for Essex County Council contract work, for which they meet the DiPTAC requirements.

Vintage Yellow Buses

Unfortunately the 'official' report in last month's issue was not issued officially by the company, but by an unauthorised employee. The first paragraph of it should be disregarded (see 'You Write', this issue).

Warrington Borough Transport

New are 'SuperMid' Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B40F 2-8 (T202-8 AFM), these and 1 (T201 AFM) in use on services 16/16A, the first of a fleet of 20 due in the next six months. Their standard livery is embellished with a large deep blue arrow just aft of the front wheels, from roof to skirt, on which promotional yellow lettering is carried; also, white areas are now cream. 1-4 are route-branded for Hospital link services 16/16A and two are dedicated to service 7 to Grappenhall. Further new deliveries are Optare MetroRiders 122/3 (T322 ELG, T323 EFM).

Renault-Dodge S56s 198-200 (D977/8 TKC, D37 NFU) have been withdrawn, whilst 191-3/5/6 (D767 YCW, E46 GRN, D757/5/3 YCW) have been sold and 197 (D700 THF) is under cannibalisation. The only Dodges now remaining are 187/9/90 ex-Preston and native 201-6 and of these, 187/9/90 and 202/3/5/6 have been stripped of transfers etc prior to disposal. By May, only DP-seated 201 and bus-seated 204 were still available for service.

Bristol REs 70-73 (LED 70-73P) have been advertised for sale. Significantly, they were the last REs in the country still with their original operator. A running day for them was held to mark their retirement on 23 May.

Leyland Atlanteans 12, 14-16 (GEK 12V etc) are now with Thomas of Porth, while 17 (HED 17V) is in use as a mobile grandstand, repainted in full Warrington colours and with Big Bus Events in black-shaded red lettering between decks. A demountable grandstand is placed on top of the existing roof for such events. Renault-Dodge S56 is with EMS of Greasby.

Whippet, Fenstanton

A second Volvo B10BLE/Alexander ALX300 is due and when received, Volvo B10Ms F693/4 PAY are expected to be sold. It is also reported that up to four more B10BLEs may be bought.

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M VAV 161X is undergoing refurbishment.

DAF C43 NEW is now with Nichols of Carlton, re-registered PIL 3534, with sister C189 MFL is with Elliotts of Ash.

The first vehicle new to Whippet to enter preservation is Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Atlantean HFL 672L, latterly with Delaine.

Wilts & Dorset

Three low-floor DAF DB250LF/Optare Spectras are due as 3158-60 (T158-60 ALJ), whilst more Optare Solos are due as 2633-50 (T633-50 AJT). Three dual-purpose Plaxton Prestige-bodied DAF saloons are also to come as 3216-8 (T216-8 REL).

Woottens Luxury Travel, Princes Risborough

Operations Manager Michael J. Wootten kindly writes to advise the acquisition of Leyland Tiger/Duple Laser 2 C57F UIB 4752 (C913 XEO) and Volvo B10M/Jonckheere Jubilee P50 C53F SJI 8101.

WRC, Aysgarth

New Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer SPD DP41F S776/9/82 RNE are in use in the Bedale area.

Yorkshire Traction YT

MCW Metrorider MF154/12/MCW B33F E207 BNS has been acquired from First Glasgow as a source of spare parts.

Volvo B10M-55/East Lancs double-decker coach 902 (E735 HFW) is being refurbished for use by the Coaching Unit. Spartan TXM2242 saloon 202 (P202 KKY) has been out of traffic for a while for suspension modifications. Volvo B6LE 127 (S127 WKY) now has an internal dot-matrix display unit, which is promoting CoachLink holidays.

Leyland National 2 220 (EDT 220V) has been downsteered from B52F to B49F and sold to RoadCar.

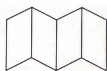


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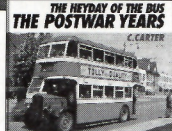
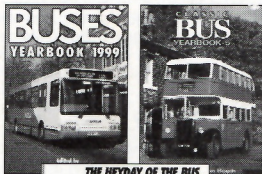
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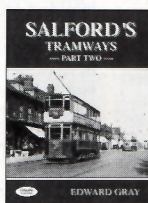
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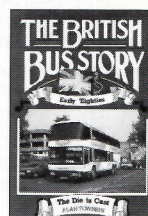
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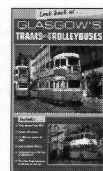


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Reports to be sent, please, to Sandy Macdonald, 12 Morton Gardens, Maxwell Park, Glasgow G41 4AF, to reach him by 22 July for the September issue.

Allan, Gorebridge

Indcar C29F-bodied Iveco EuroMidi CC80E18M/P CSU 253 was new in May. Plaxton C46Ft-bodied DAF MB200DKTL600 CSU 253 (*N/W 5841, VSA 743X*) was re-registered back to VSA 743X then and sold to AW Group (dealer), Ratby in part exchange.

Allander, Milngavie

Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M-48 AT10 (2367 AT, *M75 FGG*) was sold in April to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis and re-registered back to M75 FGG.

Allison, Dunfermline

Reeve Burgess C18F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D F235 NLC and Plaxton B27F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D J460 YDT have been acquired. They were previously with Jay, Greengairs and Midland, Auchterarder respectively. Alexander-bodied Dennis Dominator KKK 117W is being broken up. Most of the fleet is now based at new premises at Touch, Dunfermline.

Arriva Scotland West AA

J293 NNB is another Mercedes-Benz 709D with Carlyle B29F bodywork obtained around March from Arriva North West where it was numbered 98.

ECW-bodied Bristol VRs WRC 833S and BKE 832T were numbered 926/7 respectively in February, while ECW H43/31F-bodied Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB 928 (DUP 745S), previously Arriva Northumbria 543, arrived in May and has been allocated to Barrhead depot.

931 (EPH 232V) is another Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R with Roe H43/30F bodywork previously Arriva Kent Thameside 6232, obtained in April and put to work from Greenock depot. Similar AN68B/1R KPJ 274W, previously Arriva Kent Thameside 6274, also arrived in April but has not yet been numbered or used. Similar 930 mentioned previously has been allocated to Barrhead.

Former Arriva London East Lancs-bodied Volvo B10M-55s H920/2/3/ 5/1/17/6/5/3 XYT have been numbered 870-8 respectively and allocated to Johnstone depot, although none had entered service by mid-May.

Three vehicles obtained on loan around the end of April are Plaxton Beaver-bodied Mercedes-Benz O.814 S744 RNE; Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart SLF S776 RNE; and SCUK-bodied Dennis Dart SLF S402 JUA. The first two are from Mistral (dealer), Knutsford while the third is from Arriva Bus & Coach. The Darts have been allocated to Johnstone and used on a variety of services.

Recent recipients of Arriva livery are Mercedes-Benz minibuses 302/8; Dennis Darts 401, 809/34/49; and Scania L113 501. 849 also carries 'Supershuttle 1' route branding for the former McGill service between Paisley and Auchenback, which was upgraded to that status from the end of March. Scania L113 515 has been given Arriva livery on the front, with the remainder still in the Sunset Holidays advertisement. In the service fleet, Mercedes-Benz L608D 454 (previously 331) is now in Arriva colours and lettered as a Support Vehicle; for this new role it has lost its seats and has reflective silver windows. DAF-engined Leyland National 781 was repainted allover red with McGill fleetnames in March while Bristol VR 920 was given an allover red front and rear on being transferred to Johnstone depot.

Leyland National 11351/1R B50F 782 (MIL 7619, *TOE 508N*) has been withdrawn after being damaged in an incident at Inverkip, and Mercedes-Benz L608D 234 (D204 SKD) has been sold to McNairn, Coatbridge.

SPT Subsidised service 377 (Cambuslang-Eurocentral) was cancelled with effect from 21 May. SPT peak-hour service 399 (Greenhills-Hairmyres Station) was introduced on 24 May to replace the similar Henderson, Hamilton service 99 (qv).

Berry, Fyvie

Duple C53F-bodied Bedford YMT UGA 426W had been acquired from Mayne, Buckie by April.

Bluebird Buses ST

Further to last month's issue, it would appear that this company is to trade as Stagecoach Bluebird in its Grampian and Highland operations, and Stagecoach Perth in its Perthshire business. The Bluebird motif and 'Catch the Bluebird' slogan are being dropped and it remains to be seen whether the Royal Warrant will survive on coaches.

Operation of the Perth Guide Friday tour commenced at the beginning of May. Open-top Leyland Titans 082/4 have been re-registered from B106/14 WUV to NIB 5455 and NIB 4138 respectively, and painted into Guide Friday livery for this. Alexander PS-bodied Volvo 577 has lost its black/white/red overall advertisement for McLeod's car dealership in favour of a mainly yellow advertising treatment, this time to the order of Scottish Communications.

Alexander DP25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D 310 (G199 PAO) has been transferred to Stagecoach South. Similar G275 TSL is numbered 1265 (not 1245) for its staff bus duties, and G271 TSL was renumbered from 271 to 1266 last November also for staff bus duties.

Bruce, Shotts

Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M-62 P240 VGD was repainted into David Urquhart livery in April.

Caber, Aberfeldy

CRS 61T is another Alexander C49F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R acquired in March, previously Bluebird Buses 140. Whittaker-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D C512 JAK was re-registered HIW 844 in March, when Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopard HIW 844 (*SSC 103P, MIB 3491, MIB 3934, NUF 662P, 402 DCD, LWV 270P*) was re-registered and withdrawn. Alexander-bodied Leopard GLS 280N was also withdrawn at that time.

Caledonian, Inverkip

Former Newark, Kilmacolm, Reeve Burgess B20F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D D93 VCC has been acquired for use on the new local service.

Canavan, Kilsyth

Alexander (Belfast)-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D M304 TSF is now with Henderson, Hamilton.

Carlton, Glasgow

From 3 May this operator has been running a service 61 between Glasgow Cross and Summerston in direct competition with First Glasgow service 61; there are also morning and evening peak hour placing journeys to Clydebank via Hardgate.

Christie, Alloa

Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean JUS 790N had left this fleet by April, when it was noted in the yard of Drakemire Dairy, Hamilton - purpose unknown.

City Sprinter, Renfrew

Alexander B20F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D D502 NWG has been purchased ex-Dunn, Port Glasgow. It has also been reported that Mercedes-Benz 609D G288 UFB was used by Dunn before joining this fleet recently.

Clyde Coast, Ardrossan

N364 HSD is a Volvo B10M-48 with Van Hool C40Ft coachwork acquired in April from Meney, Saltcoats. Plaxton C38Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-46s 341 AYF (*G964 VGD, 90-KY-3016, G964 VGD, LSK 613, G47 RGG*) and TJI 6264 (*G965 VGD, 90-KY-3017, G965 VGD, LSK 614, G48 RGG*) were sold to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis in April. The 341 AYF mark is currently on a company car.

Coakley, Motherwell

Yet another new bus for this operator is T500 CBC, a Marshall B43F-bodied Dennis Dart SLF.

Dart, Paisley

D33 (T575 KGB) is a further Marshall Capital B43F-bodied Dennis Dart SLF to enter service with this company. Mercedes-Benz midibuses M53/5/6 have had their front bumpers painted white instead of blue, which enhances their appearance. Leyland National N28 (NIL 7242, *TRN 806V*) has been sold to Shuttle Buses, Kilwinning for spares.

Davies, Plean

ECW H43/32F-bodied Leyland Fleetline FE30AGR ASA 27T, previously Western Buses 847, was acquired in March.

Dickson, Paisley

G302 WHP, a PMT B25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D previously Midland Red South 302, has been added to this fleet.

Dodds, Ayr

Alexander Y-type B53F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3F/4R WFS 147W and similar PSU3G/4R XMS 423Y were acquired in April from Western Buses where they were numbered 631/23 respectively. The latter had entered service by early May in cream with green skirt and waistband, and carrying fleetnumber 423.

Dunn, Airdrie

Plaxton Beaver-bodied Mercedes-Benz O.814 T980 OGA was new in April.

Dunn, Port Glasgow

Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D F403 KOD was acquired in March ex-Slaemuir, Port Glasgow. Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D D502 NWG is now with City Sprinter, Renfrew, and it is reported that Made to Measure-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D G288 UFB was also used by this firm before joining the City Sprinter fleet recently.

EB Travel, Paisley

This operator appears to have expanded to take over from Green Line, Paisley which had its licence revoked by the Traffic Commissioner. Former Green Line vehicles being used on the service between Paisley and Auchenback are MCW Metrorider F110 YWO and Carlyle-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D H509 AGC (*WLT 400, H884 LOX*), both of which are in a livery of yellow with dark grey skirt, the former also carrying EB Travel fleetnames.

Essbee, Coatbridge

E949 JJN (*185 CLT, E892 KYW*) is a Volvo B10M-61 with Duple C53F coachwork acquired in April ex-Arriva East Herts & Sussex VDL185.

Fairline, Glasgow

J255 NNC is a Volvo B10M-60 with Van Hool C53F coachwork acquired in March ex-Shearings 255.

Fairway, Paisley

Dormobile B31F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D L529 XNR has been acquired ex-Arriva North West 194, and still carries Little White Bus livery.

Fife Buses ST

Not previously recorded is the sale of Alexander Sprint-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 80/1 (G280/1 TSL) and 85,92-4 (K485/92-4 FFS) to Busways in January.

First Aberdeen FG

Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean 321 has been repainted into the ivory and green livery, and Dennis Dart SLF 220 has been given Gold Service Contravision branding. 281 (HSO 281V) is the latest Atlantean to be sold to Dunsmore (dealer), Larkhall for scrap.

From the beginning of May this company became the first in the group to adopt a new uniform which includes a bomber style jacket, a waistcoat and a baseball type cap. These are to be supplied throughout the group in due course.

First Glasgow FG

Marshall B27F-bodied Dennis Dart MPD S979 JLM was on loan during late-April and early May. This bus is First CentreWest 102 in full First Group corporate livery, and was operated from Knightswood depot on Clydebank local service 86 (Parkhall-Old Kilpatrick).

Further repaints into allover red are Ailsas A44, 93/9; Leyland Olympian L0123; MCW Metrobuses MB51/3; Volvo B10M SV429; and Volvo Citybuses AH42, 63, 76, 82.

It is reported that Northern Counties-bodied Volvo Olympian VO158 is H42/29F rather than H43/29F.

First Lowland FG

The usual seasonal influx of coaches has started with the return in April of various old friends on loan from Arriva (dealer), Gomersal including Van Hool C51F-bodied DAF MB230LT615 2311 (L521 EHD), last used by McCutcheon, Lisbellow but here previously in 1996 numbered 111 and 1997 numbered 2319; EOS 180Z-C44Ft integrals 2501/2 (R81/2 GNV), here last year numbered 2109/10; and EOS 180Z-C51Ft integral 2509 (N49 FWU), here previously in 1996 numbered 108, in 1997 numbered 2312 and in 1998 numbered 2108. As before, the EOS coaches are for Prestige Tours work and are allocated to Galashiels (2501/2) or Dalkeith (2509).

Further to the May issue, Omni 1739 had not been given Gaberlunzie Bus lettering by the end of April although in the green and navy colours for that service. Plaxton-bodied Scania K113CRBs 2101/5 are now in allover white, while Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger is allover white with Lowland Coaches lettering.

WHITE FLAG FROM WHITE RIBBON

In early May the White Ribbon Leisure business of East Kilbride ceased to trade, apparently as a direct result of being suspended from operation of Strathclyde Passenger Transport school and local bus service contracts due to concerns over vehicle quality. The associated Gilchrist Coaches Ltd business also ceased to trade.

White Ribbon Coaches first entered the local bus service market in March 1988 with a half hourly service between Hairmyres and Calderwood in East Kilbride. The business flourished and other local service developments, both commercial and subsidised, followed in the East Kilbride area. In 1997 the company was acquired by businessman Ian Luke, and expansion followed with considerable numbers of new vehicles being obtained and more subsidised local service work being taken on. Two old-established coach firms, Grayline Coaches of Clackmannan and Gilchrist Coaches of East Kilbride were also acquired by Luke, and by mid-1998 the three businesses were effectively being run under common management.

In addition to its commercial bus services largely competing with First Glasgow, by April White Ribbon was operating eight school contracts and 14 local bus service contracts on behalf of SPT, the latter as far apart as Leadhills and Govan. A subsidised service was also being operated on behalf of Dumfries & Galloway Council between Sanquhar and Leadhills. Following suspension from the SPT contracts at the beginning of May, the company appears to have continued to run its commercial services plus two tendered routes until 10 May when it seems that it succumbed to reality and all operations ceased abruptly. It is reported that most of the fleet, which included many R and S-registered vehicles, was then returned to Blythswood (dealer), Glasgow.

Arrangements were then made by SPT to replace all of its subsidised services, together with one or two parts of the White Ribbon commercial services not covered by other operators. Arriva Scotland West replaced most, considerably extending its Lanarkshire presence in the process with services from East Kilbride to Auldhous, Castlemilk and Eaglesham; between Motherwell and Uddingston (Sundays), Lanark and Law Hospital (evenings and Sundays), Wishaw and Law (Sundays), Cambuslang and Toryglen (evenings and Sundays), and Buchanan Bus Station to Southern General Hospital (evenings and Sundays). First Glasgow, Henderson Travel and Collision's Stonehouse Coaches obtained the other SPT contracts, resulting in the latter now running the Lanark to Pettinain/Leadhills services throughout the week rather than just on Sundays as before. Dumfries & Galloway Council used Western Buses to replace White Ribbon's Leadhills/Sanquhar service.

The Traffic Commissioner will no doubt become involved now, in view of the manner in which the local services were given up.

FUEL DUTY REBATE REPAYMENTS

The Scottish Traffic Commissioner has recently been involved in Public Inquiries with two other local bus service operators, Dart Buses and First Midland Bluebird, following receipt of complaints about their bus services. The result in each case was that a determination was made under Section 111 of the Transport Act 1985 that 20% of Fuel Duty Rebate paid to the company over a period was to be repaid.

On 30 March Dart Buses appeared in traffic court to show why its licence should not be revoked and why it should not be prevented from operating local services. This had been brought about by the issue of a number of immediate prohibitions on its vehicles and a number of complaints about its services.

On the maintenance side, the company highlighted various procedural improvements which had been adopted, together with the large number of new vehicles purchased since a previous Public Inquiry in 1997 — 18 so far, with several Dennis Darts due for delivery that week, five more MAN and three Volvo buses due by July 1999. It was acknowledged that maintenance problems were largely related to the now dwindling number of older vehicles.

Thirty-one complaints had been received about local services unreliability and this had led the Commissioner to monitor 46 journeys over two days in January and February this year. Only three were more than five minutes late — one at six minutes late and two at seven minutes. Dart claimed that earlier problems had been largely attributable to the older vehicles being run at that time.

While acknowledging that the reliability problems seemed to have been solved, the Commissioner nevertheless felt that he had to take account of the failings over the four-month period in question and that repayment of 20% of the fuel duty rebate paid was in order.

In the First Midland Bluebird inquiry the following day, the company was criticised for accepting delays as the norm, failing to advertise service changes adequately, and failing to ensure that buses left depots on time. In monitoring the company's services in West Lothian (one of the areas where the local Council had formally complained about the quality of the company's services) the Traffic Commissioner's staff had found 63 out of 251 journeys failing to run to timetable by more than five minutes, and five not running at all, in five days of monitoring 12 different services.

The company argued that the times on one service monitored had been changed by five minutes under existing rules, that delays on Mondays were due to on-bus weekly ticket sales, and that Wayfarer ticket machine evidence did not support the monitoring team's findings, but the Commissioner dismissed this. Inadequate publicity of the timetable change had not helped the monitors, use of off-bus ticket outlets or even conductors could have helped the Monday delays, and Wayfarer data only gave a general picture as it was dependent on the diligence of the driver.

While it was acknowledged that the company's West Lothian services were improving, the company's suggestion that an 18% failure rate could be acceptable brought the retort from the Traffic Commissioner that such standards offered little prospect of encouraging the public to return to using buses, and that the minimum standard should be a failure rate of 5%.

Fines of this nature have rarely been levied against such large operators as 375-vehicle First Midland Bluebird, and the cash amount of the fine imposed on First Midland Bluebird was not revealed by the Traffic Commissioner, but the 17million miles run annually by the company suggests that it would be over £100,000. FirstGroup is to lodge an appeal on the grounds of inaccurate observations and the harshness of the decision.

Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 640/1 (J778/9 WLS) were transferred to this company from First Midland Bluebird in March, initially for Kelso depot but now in use at Berwick with 640 in First Lowland colours and 641 in all-over white as the Paxton House dedicated shuttle bus on service 32 (Berwick-Paxton). It may be recalled that the owners of Paxton House stepped in to rescue service 32 in 1997 when First Lowland was considering withdrawing it.

Vehicles sold during March and April comprised Alexander-bodied Dodge S56s 1423/5 (D753/5 DSH); and Alexander-bodied Seddon Pennines 1618 (SSX 618V), 1640 (YSG 640W), 1666 (DSD 958V), 1683/5 (JFS 983/5X), and 1687 (SSX 597V). Of these, 1640/83 were taken by Dunsmore (dealer), Larkhall.

First Midland Bluebird FG

280/1 (S780/3 RNE) are a pair of Dennis Dart SPDs with Plaxton B41F bodywork which arrived in March and were put to work from Livingston depot in all-over white. 2505/6 (T105/6 AUA) are a pair of EOS coaches for Prestige Tours work which arrived in April at Westfield depot, but further details of them are not yet available other than that they are in a two-tone blue livery with lettering for Scottish Sightseeing, an offshoot of Prestige which runs a day tour programme from Edinburgh.

More arrivals in April were 352/65/70 (A22. 35, 40 VDS), Alexander TS B53F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRBLXB/2RHs previously First Glasgow ST342/35/40 respectively and allocated to Larbert depot (352/70) — similar A29 VDS, acquired some months ago, is numbered 359. 2110 (K535 RJX) is a Van Hool C57F-bodied DAF MB230LTF615 obtained on loan in April for the summer from Arriva (dealer), Gomersal; it was previously on loan here in 1996 numbered 1005 and in 1998 numbered 2110.

Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 640/1 (J778/9 WLS) were transferred to First Lowland in March.

Reeve Burgess-bodied Renault S75 1494 has been repainted into a new-style livery of cream with a skirt comprising three bands, from top to bottom, in Midland Bluebird blue, SMT green, and Lowland yellow, together with blue wheels. This livery in effect uses elements of the current non-corporate First Lowland, First SMT and First Midland Bluebird liveries, and this might suggest that all of these liveries are to be combined into one scheme.

Meanwhile, more repaints to record into the First Midland Bluebird livery comprise Leyland Tigers 365/70; MCW Metrobus 808; and Scania N113CRB 564, while recent repaints into First SMT colours comprise Ailsa 1050; Dennis Darts 204/5; and Optare MetroRiders 1511/6/24. Van Hool-bodied Scania 2107 and Jonckheere-bodied Volvo 2208 are all-over white with Scottish Citylink fleetnames.

Renault S56 1436 (E436 JSG) was renumbered 9932 last December, and during February/March Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 608 (D227 UHC), 614 (C695 ECV) and Renault S75 1488 (H488 OSC) were renumbered 9927/31/5 respectively. 9927 has been used as a staff shuttle at Larbert in all-over cream; 9931 is a staff shuttle at Livingston; 9932 was used for similar duties till February when it was withdrawn; and 9935 is also based at Livingston, use unknown.



Arriva Scotland West has acquired a batch of East Lancs-bodied Volvo B10Ms saloons from Arriva London North East. They were new to Grey-Green, but have recently been on loan to Independent Way, Limebourne's successor in London. First into service was 879 (H912 XYT). BILLY NICOL

Many vehicles had left this fleet by March including Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans 702/3 (ORS 202/3R), 718/21/3/6/7 (XSA 218S etc), 733/6 (YSO 233/6T), 738/43/7 (DSA 238/43/7T), 773 (HRS 273V); Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopards 410 (TMS 410X), 413 (ULS 713X), 425 (XMS 425Y), 438 (ULS 338T), 441/2 (DLS 351/2V), 454-6 (WFS 146/3/4W), 476/7/9/81/2/4 (LMS 376W etc); Leyland Nationals 26 (DMS 26V), 29 (NLS 981W), 33 (PNW 606W), 35 (XTJ 5W); ECW-bodied Leyland Olympians 900/2/10/4/5 (ULS 100X etc); Duple-bodied Leyland Tigers 107 (? , 101 ASV, BLS 107Y), 139 (119 ASV, SSJ 132Y), 147 (SSU 827, HGD 711X, WLT 770, MSC 554X); Alexander-bodied MCW Metrobus 834 (ULS 624X); Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D 603 (C678 ECV); Robin Hood-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D 612 (D534 KGL); Alexander-bodied Renault S56s 1432/9/41/9/53/4/6/9/60/2/6/8/70 (E432 JSG etc); Wright-bodied Scania L113CRL 592 (R464 JFS); and Alexander-bodied Seddon Pennines 1645 (YSG 645W), 1696 (GSX 896T). Of these 438/42, 914/5 were taken by Dunsmore (dealer), Larkhall.

New daily, half-hourly SPT subsidised service 69 between Milngavie Station and Mugdock Country Park commenced on 24 April.

First Stop, Renfrew

Two new service buses placed in service recently are Crystals B20F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 512D T967 JAO and Plaxton B31F-bodied Mercedes-Benz O.814 T453 HNH. Northern Counties-bodied Dodge S46 D921 KWW has been sold to Shuttle Buses, Kilwinning for breaking up.

Fitzcharles, Grangemouth

K15/6 BUS are Plaxton C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-60s acquired from Hutchison, Overtown in March.

Galson, Barvas

JIL 3713 (*E314 OMG*) is a Volvo B10M-61 with Plaxton C53F coachwork acquired in April, having previously been with Amport & District, Thruxton. Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tigers GS47 (SAZ 3952, *A112 TRP*) and GS48 (TAZ 3608, *A113 TRP*) have been sold with the former now with James, Tetbury.

Gillen, Port Glasgow

Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D F135 KAO was acquired in March.

Goosecroft, Denny

Sparshatt B20F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D RBZ 5495 (*D83 UVF*) and Reeve Burgess B25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D G574 FSD were acquired in March, having previously been numbered 083 and 221 respectively in the Western Buses fleet. Northern Counties-bodied Renault S46 J644 LKD was sold at that time.

Hebridean Transport, Stornoway

A10 TBT (*WCU 823T*) is a Plaxton C53F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R acquired in March ex-Clark, Wickersley.

Henderson, Hamilton

Alexander (Belfast) B29F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D M304 TSF has been acquired ex-Canavan, Kilsyth. Recently delivered Plaxton-bodied Mercedes-Benz T92 JBA is now a white-based overall advertisement for Specsavers, previously allover white. This bus (together with similar T87, 93 JBA) is B31F.

Plaxton Derwent-bodied Volvo B10M-56 E157 XHS now carries a turquoise allover advertising livery for Esporta Health & Racquets Club, Hamilton albeit with fleet livery retained on its front, and Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D F136 KAO has lost its TyreSave advertisement but this is now carried by Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D C808 SDY on its ValuBus livery.

Plaxton Derwent B54F-bodied Volvo B10M-56 E156 XHS was sold to Blue Bus, Horwich in March; Alexander B25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D G109 CSF was written off after an accident in February and is now being broken up for spares. Its seats were due to be fitted to similar C25F-bodied E635 LSF during April.

East Kilbride service 99 (Greenhills-Hairmyres Station), which operated without subsidy, was withdrawn on 21 May. From 21 June another new SPT subsidised rail feeder bus service was due to be introduced; service 394 will operate hourly on Mondays to Saturdays between Patterson Station and Whitecraigs Station in the Newton Mearns area.

Highland Country RN

T134 AST is the new Wright Crusader 2 B37F-bodied Volvo B6BLE mentioned last month. It is in the new two-tone blue livery and has been allocated to Fort William depot.

2092/4 (VBG 92/4V) are more Leyland National NL116L/1R-B49F buses acquired from the Arriva group, now allocated to Inverness and Portree respectively. JN 90 AA, one of the former MoD Wadham Stringer Wessex C25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 814Ds purchased recently, has been re-registered P343 JAS, numbered 5343, and allocated to Fort William depot.

Additional vehicles in the new two-tone blue livery include Leyland Leopard 2375; Leyland Nationals 2084, 2727; and Mercedes-Benz 814D 5343.

Hutchison, Overtown

Plaxton-bodied Volvo coaches K15/6 BUS were sold to Fitzcharles, Grangemouth in March.

Keenan, Coalhall

GCS 48V is an Alexander B53F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R acquired in April ex-Western Buses 648.

Keir, Glass

Plaxton C57F-bodied Volvo B10M-60 G390 NNS was acquired in March ex-Long, Salsburgh.

Kirkpatrick, Banchory FG

907 (LSK 529, *F739 WMS*), a Dennis Javelin 8.5SDL with Plaxton C35F bodywork, was transferred to this fleet from Mairs in April in exchange for Duple-bodied Volvo B10M-61 901 (GSU 390, *E407 RWR*) which was returned to Mairs.

Mercedes-Benz L307D 909 has been re-registered from D951 VSS to LSK 546. The new mark for withdrawn Mercedes-Benz L608D 904 (LSK 546, *C200 HGF*) is not known.

Lianne, Renfrew

D441 UHC, an Alexander B20F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D, has been acquired ex-Boyce, Milton of Campsie.

Liddell, Auchinleck

Duple C53Fi-bodied DAF MB230DKFL615 D123 GCD (*WSV 501, D614 SJX*) was purchased in March ex-Bradshaw, Heywood.

Lindsay, Lochboisdale

From 19 April this operator registered Western Isles Council services between North Stoneybridge and Daliburgh (Mondays to Fridays), and between South Glendale and Howmore (Mondays to Saturdays).

Lochs, Leurbost

Mellor-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D N231 MUS was sold to Waverley, Edinburgh in May.

Lothian

Alexander ALX400 H51/25F-bodied Dennis Tridents 501-5 (T501-5 SSG) were delivered to the company in April and were handed over officially at a photo-call held at Leith Docks beside the former Royal Yacht *Britannia* on 18 May. They are to a 4.2m low-height dimension, are 10.5m long and 2.516m wide. They wear a mainly white livery with madder skirt bordered by a cherry red band, and an area under the windscreens is also cherry red. A harlequin effect in red and gold square vinyls is featured after the Lothian fleetnames on the upper deck panels, and this cascades down the back of the vehicles. A slightly revised LRT logo in red and gold appears on the lower panels while fleetnumbers are in large, madder font. White on black route branding is carried along the sides, below the upper deck windows, for service 44 (Balerno-Wallyford) which is to be revamped from 4 July, when 10 low-floor double deck buses should be available (14 buses are required for this service).

80 (T80 LRT) is a further Berkhof Radial-bodied Dennis Javelin SFD721BR4 which had joined the coach fleet by mid-May.

Volvo Olympian 433 has had side and rear posters applied advertising former Royal Yacht *Britannia* express service X50 on which it is normally to be found. To accommodate the adverts, the large blue LRT Lothian fleetnames carried between decks have been removed with smaller versions now carried on the lower panels. Lettering for coach hire carried on the rear has also had to be altered and re-positioned. The two small LRT Lothian logos normally situated on either side of the front destination panel have been removed and replaced under the windscreen with Lothian LRT (note reversal of normal form) in blue. As recent vehicle repaints have been appearing without the front logos it would appear that something similar in style may be used on all buses in future.

ECW-bodied Leyland Olympian 710 has finally lost its allover advertising livery for Burger King in favour of normal fleet colours - it was the sole remaining vehicle in an advertising livery.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympian 667 has had its front electronic destination/service number screen replaced by a three-split blind display box. This is the first time it has had a non-electronic screen — in recent years problems with the screen has meant that this bus has only been used on circular services 19/39.

Open-top Leyland Olympian 300 *Scottish Star* was used in Sunderland on 10 May to convey the Sunderland football team on its parade with the Division One Championship Trophy from the Stadium of Light to the Seaburn Centre. Two other open-top buses also used were from York Pullman and Moordale Coaches.

25 is another former Cambridge Classic Tour Leyland Atlantean to return to Edinburgh for use as a back-up bus for the Edinburgh Classic Tour. It has been repainted and renamed *Waverley Star* from *Eastern Star* for this purpose.

The entire York Classic Tour operation and vehicles, including the associated school and works contracts, were sold to Guide Friday in mid-April. The vehicles concerned comprised open-top Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans 443 (GFS 443N), 477 (MSF 477P), 911/2/25/8 (OFS 911/2/25/8M). It is also reported that Guide Friday has purchased other open-top Atlanteans recently withdrawn following the introduction of open-top Leyland Olympians. Duple Caribbean C51F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3RHs 59.60 (A59.60 AFS) were sold to Whitehead, Rochdale in February.

MacDonald, Tolstachaolais

Murdo John MacDonald has registered a Mondays to Saturdays, Western Isles Council service between Tolstachaolais and Callanish on the west side of Lewis.

McKendry, Loanhead

Plaxton C53F-bodied Ford R1114 UBR 404V has been sold to Westwood (dealer), West Calder for scrap.

McNairn, Coatbridge

Reeve Burgess DP19F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D D204 SKD was acquired in March from Arriva Scotland West, where it was numbered 234.

McQueen, Garelochhead

East Lancs-bodied Dodge S56 E899 SDW is now owned by Carlton, Glasgow.

McTaggart, Greenock

T100 STL and T200 STL are a pair of Volvo B10M-62s with Caetano Enigma coachwork new in April.

MacVicar, Linclate

From 19 April this operator has registered a Mondays to Saturdays, Western Isles Council service between Ardivachar and Balivanich Airport on Benbecula.

Mairs, Aberdeen FG

Former First Aberdeen Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds H36/7 HSO have been numbered 713/7 respectively. Another addition in April was Duple C57F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 GSU 390 (*E407 RWR*) transferred from Kirkpatrick, Banchory where it was numbered 901; it had previously been numbered 735 in this fleet. Dennis Javelin 739 (LSK 529, *F739 WMS*) passed to Kirkpatrick in exchange.

Mayne, Buckie

Recent additions comprise Duple C53F-bodied Bedford YMT FPP 6T ex-Feeley, Walsall; Duple C53F-bodied Volvo B58-56 FON 980V ex-Brown, Crawley; and Carlyle B20F-bodied Freight Rover Sherpa E92 OUH ex-Glenesk Travel, Edzell. Jonckheere-bodied Volvo B10M-62 R190 SUT was re-registered R555 GSM in April.

Vehicles sold to Berkhof (dealer), Bracknell in April comprised Berkhof C53F-bodied MAN 16.280 YSU 990 (*C44 KHS*); Caetano C21F-bodied Toyota HB31R F680 LGG; and Berkhof-bodied MAN 11.220 R555 GSM. Berkhof-bodied MAN 11.220 R500 GSM was sold to Neoplan (dealer), Hellaby at that time.

Meffan, Kirriemuir YT

Further to the April issue, the Mellor B16F-bodied Ford Transit added to this fleet at the beginning of the year was D777 NDV, not D777 NDU as previously reported. It had been numbered 244 in the Devon General Bayline fleet.

Alexander T type-bodied Leyland Leopard XNR 453 (*CRS 65T*) was loaned to Strathtay around April in exchange for Alexander Y type-bodied Leopard YSF 87S, numbered 560 in the latter fleet.

Meney, Saltcoats

Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M-48 N364 HSD was sold to Clyde Coast, Ardrossan in April while Van Hool T815 integral K100 RMS, sold to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis last October, is now with McCutcheon, Lisbellow.

Midland, Auchterarder

Plaxton-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D J460 YDT was sold to Allison, Dunfermline in April.

Moffat & Williamson, Gauldry

EJR 115W is an Alexander H49/37F-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68A/2R acquired in April ex-Stagecoach Busesways 215.

Myles, Crieff

Further to the March issue H361 VSS, a Caetano C21F-bodied Toyota HDB30R, was acquired from Lawson, Methven in April 1998 but Talbot Freeway E321 HKV is no longer owned.

Orion, Wemyss Bay

HDZ 5436, another Wright B31F-bodied Renault S75, was purchased in March ex-First Beeline RW36.

PD Travel, Clydebank

A notable livery change concerns Mercedes-Benz L608Ds C422 VVN and D234 URG, both previously in the brown and cream colours but now repainted allover red with white PD Travel fleetnames — not unlike one of the liveries used by First Glasgow!

Prestwick Airport ST

Former AA Buses and Western Buses Scania C351 SVV and H466 WGG have been repainted into corporate stripes for airside use. The former has straight side stripes which do not continue around the front or rear, red Stagecoach and Prestwick Airport Courtesy Coach lettering, a red and white chevron bumper, an orange flashing rooflight, and has had its destination box behind the windscreen removed. The latter has normal stripes, albeit applied lower than normal on this type of vehicle.

Rapsons Coaches RN

G264 NUX (*3275 RU, G512 EFX*) is a Plaxton Paramount 3500 C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-60 acquired in April, previously Baker, Biddulph 6. Plaxton Expressliner-bodied Volvo B10M-62 N139 YST has been re-seated from C46Ft to C48Ft.

Rennie, Dunfermline

ECW-bodied Bristol VR XBO 121T is now in white and blue fleet colours.

Shalder, Scalloway RN

Two new buses were acquired for use in Shetland prior to the recent sale of the company to the Rapson Group. S388/9 JPS are a pair of Marshall B40F-bodied MAN 11.220s.

Shiel, Acharacle

Further to the February issue, S147 KRB is a Mercedes-Benz 410D with Crystals 16-seat bodywork, purchased new by last November.

Shuttle Buses, Kilwinning

Two more vehicles acquired recently for spares are Northern Counties B22F-bodied Dodge S46 D921 KWW ex-First Stop Travel, Renfrew and Leyland National 10351B/1R-B44F NIL 7241 (*TRN 806V*) ex-Dart Buses, Paisley N28. The latter has already donated its engine and gearbox to similar NIL 7242 which has now been painted into fleet livery, as has Northern Counties-bodied Ailsa OSN 860Y, previously in MerseyPride colours. Leyland National QJD 888R has also been repainted, but into allover London Transport red.



July 1999

Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean UJI 8218 (*SCN 271S*) has just returned to service after being out of use for eight months.

SPT subsidised service 204 (Dundonald-Ayr) was diverted from 26 April to avoid Symington, thereby reducing the extent to which it followed Western Buses service 4 (Glasgow-Ayr).

Silver Fox, Renfrew

Van Hool C50Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-61 NVY 148 was sold to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis in April.

Slaemuir, Port Glasgow

Plaxton B27F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D N616 DWY was purchased in April.

Slocoach, Motherwell

A second local service has been registered in the shape of a Saturdays, Sundays, and school holidays link between Motherwell railway station and Strathclyde Park. It commenced on 15 May and is to continue until 17 October, with similar dates being operated in subsequent years.

Smith, Coupar Angus

Caetano C53F-bodied DAF SB2305DHS585 G886 USP is now with Letham, Blantyre.

Stokes, Carstairs

The first new service bus for this fleet for some time is T448 EBD, a Mercedes-Benz O.814 with Plaxton Beaver B31F bodywork which arrived in April.

Strathtay YT

New Plaxton Beaver 2 DP25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Varios 167/8 (T167/8 ATS) arrived in early April and are allocated to Dundee depot. 167 carries a mainly white advertising livery with green and blue lettering to promote Sucking Airways Dundee-London City Airport link and Dundee Airport in general, and is being used on the new Airport service 100 mentioned last month. 168 is in a revised version of the coach livery, similar to that on the Optare MetroRiders but with the rear mainly blue.

MF150/28 170 (D533 SKY) and MF150/77 171 (E650 XWG) are another two B23F MCW Metroriders which have been transferred to this fleet on loan from Yorkshire Traction, where they were numbered 533/50. Although not recorded until now, they arrived in January and were allocated to Montrose and Blairgowrie depots respectively, entering service in Yorkshire Traction Townlink livery as received. Loans such as these have tended to be protracted.

P698 HND, a Plaxton Beaver B27F-bodied Mercedes-Benz O.814, was on loan to this company from Mistral (dealer), Knutsford from the end of April and was used as a schoolbus from Arbroath depot until mid-May when it left the fleet. S780 RNE, a Dennis Dart SPD with Plaxton Pointer B41F bodywork, arrived on loan also from Mistral in mid-May and was used from Dundee depot on crew-operated duties as it had no ticket machine fitted — does this make it the only crew operated Dennis Dart SPD in use? A small Strathtay fleetname was carried on the front.

Further to the April issue, Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz 169 was Cambus 2311 before joining this fleet, and in March was repainted into fleet livery in lieu of its Stagecoach colours. Similar 166 is also now in fleet colours.

Alexander Y type-bodied Leyland Leopard 560 was loaned to Meffan, Kirriemuir around April in exchange for Alexander T-type-bodied Leopard XNR 453 (*CRS 65T*).

Thistle, Dalry

Vehicles acquired for the resumption of the Dalry local service comprise Alexander B21F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608Ds D122/39 NUS, previously owned by Western Buses and Slaemuir, Port Glasgow respectively. The former is now allover white with Thistle Bus Company fleetnames and thistle motif.

Travel Dundee NX

Twenty Plaxton President-bodied Volvo B7L double-deck buses are due to be delivered to this operator later this year and are expected to be numbered 1-20. When they arrive it is anticipated that Optare Spectra 2 will be moved to the Travel West Midlands fleet.

Service changes were implemented at the beginning of May, including the reintroduction of evening journeys on 7/8 (Douglas Circular) after a gap of more than 12 years during which subsidised Strathtay journeys have operated; the reinstatement of 13/14 (Cross City) which was withdrawn in August 1996; the reintroduction of evening and Sunday journeys on 36/37 (Northern Circular) which Strathtay has provided with subsidy since 1986; and the withdrawal of 38 (Albert Square-Tesco Kingsway) and 40 (Commercial Street-Ninewells Hospital).

Watermill, Fraserburgh

T111 WCS is a Mercedes-Benz O.814 with Plaxton C31F coachwork which was new in May.

Waverley, Edinburgh

N231 MUS is a Mercedes-Benz 709D with Mellor B29F bodywork acquired in May ex-Lochs Motor Transport, Leurbost.

Western Buses ST

192 (T640 KCS) is a new Jonckheere Modulo AC72F-bodied Volvo B10MA was delivered to Kilmarnock depot at the end of April and subsequently put to use on service X36.

Former Crawford, Neilston Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-62 193 (P281 XYS) has had its Scottish Highway Express fleetnames removed and been renumbered 106.

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-60 134 (H402 DEG) and similar Volvo B10M-61s 162/3 (HSV 194/5, *E904/5 UNW*), 178 (HSV 196, *E315 OEG*) have been transferred to Bluebird Buses without being used by this company. Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D 079 (G291 TSL) has been transferred to Stagecoach South.

Butlin's Wonderwest World liveried Leyland Titans 935/41/7 were repainted into corporate livery by the start of the new season at the end of March although generally used on the Ayr-Craig Tara Holiday Park service. Alexander PS-bodied Volvo 582 now carries a blue-based rear end advertisement for McLean Homes.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopards 623 (XMS 423Y) and 631 (WFS 147W) have been sold to Dodds, Troon while similar 648 (GCS 48V) has gone to Keenan, Coalhall. More vehicles have been taken by Houston Ramm (dealer), Sudden comprising Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 201 (RBZ 5496, *C101 KDS*), 206 (C106 KDS), 211/23/9 (D111/23/9 NUS); and Leyland National NL116L11/1Rs 786 (SNS 826W), 789 (NLS 989W). There are now no Mercedes-Benz L608D vehicles left. Former AA Buses Carlyle-bodied Iveco 49.10 1036 (G362 FOP) has been sold to Ferrymill Motors.

The former A1 Service route 11 (Kilmarnock-Ardrossan) became a mixed operation by crewed and opo buses in early April, following a number of conductors being made redundant.

From 29 April this company has operated an SPT contract to provide a link between Troon Station and Troon Harbour to connect with Sea Containers new Troon-Belfast SeaCat service.

Whyte, Newmachar

T641-3 BSS are Van Hool C49Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-55 coaches new in April. Caetano C33F-bodied MAN 11.190 M105 PRS and Caetano C53F-bodied DAF SB3000WS601 M106 PRS were sold to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis at that time.

Wilson, Carnwath

PRA 110/2R are Alexander T-type C49F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3C/4Rs and CRS 69T is a similar PSU3E/4R, all acquired in April having previously been Bluebird Buses 136/7/44 respectively.

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Group codes	
AA —	Arriva Passenger Services
FG —	FirstGroup
NX —	National Express Group
RN —	Rapsons
ST —	Stagecoach
YT —	Yorkshire Traction

Left:
A Dart Dart! Dart of Paisley's recent fleet renewal has included Dennis Dart SLFs with similar Marshall bodywork to the MANs in the fleet. D32 (T132 MGB) is seen in Paisley. BILLY NICOL

Below:
First Midland Bluebird is operating a number of Van Hool EOSs in this striking Scottish Sightseeing livery, as carried on T106 AUA. BILLY NICOL



Reports on vehicles in Northern Ireland only should be sent, please, to: **G. Irvine Millar, 54 Castlemore Avenue, Belfast BT6 9RG**, and those for the Irish Republic to: **John A. Doherty, 21 Whitebeam Avenue, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14.**

IRISH MAJOR OPERATORS

Ulsterbus

Four new Volvo B10Ms with Plaxton Excalibur C49Ft coachwork joined the Ulsterbus Tours fleet in May, finished in tours livery and outwardly similar to the previous group. Two further coaches are expected for Cross Channel Express services work. Following the transfer of the London-Stranraer-Belfast services from National Express to Eurolines from March it is expected that these two coaches will be finished in white with Eurolines lettering and will operate from Stranraer garage.

Ulsterbus vehicles allocated to the rail replacement service described under Citybus, below, include the first service operations for the two new Dennis Dart SLF/Wrights Crusader 646/7 (YAZ 8646/7). Also used were Leyland Tigers 500 (RXI 5500) with Plaxton bodywork, Duple 320-bodied 536 (IXI 1536), Wright Contour-bodied 538/41/4 (GXI 538, EXI 5541/4), Duple Caribbean-bodied 550/4 (EXI 5550, BXI 5554) and DAF/Duple Caribbean 682 (RXI 6682). To facilitate this operation several older training buses have been reinstated after many months of inactivity. Former Scottish Bus Group Leyland Leopard/Alexander Y-type 1881/4 (MHS 20P, OSJ 609R) have been reinstated for training duties, together with Leyland Tiger/Duple Dominant IV 556 (CXI 1556).

Leyland Tiger/Alexander N-type 1237 (NXI 4237) has been withdrawn following electrical fire damage.

Leyland Tiger/Duple 534/5 (JXI 534/5) are transferred from the Ulsterbus Tours fleet to Londonderry. Bristol RELL 2320 (TOI 2320) has been transferred from Newtownabbey to Enniskillen, whilst 2462 (WOI 8462) was returned from Enniskillen to the Citybus fleet.

Citybus

A major railway replacement service, expected to last three months, began on Sunday 23 May 1999. The line around Belfast City Centre from Belfast Central to Great Victoria Street is closed for track relaying and passengers making through journeys together with those travelling to and from the two intermediate stations at Botanic and City Hospital are being conveyed by buses provided by Citybus and Flexibus, although vehicles have been sourced from a wide range of operators including Ulsterbus coaches normally used primarily for driver training.

Volvo B10L/Alexander Ultra 2737/8/41-3 (LAZ 2737 etc) together with Bristol RELL 2471 (WOI 8471) have been allocated to Great Victoria Street for the rail replacement service, released by the reinstatement of Bristol RELL/Alexander 2463/5/8/9/73 (WOI 8463 etc), 2482 (XOI 2482) from reserve.

Leyland Tiger advertising bus 2666 (VXI 2666) is now repainted to promote Belfast City Council's 'Keep Belfast Tidy' campaign.

Dublin Bus

Dublin Bus express services over a variety of routes were given new branding in May with a launch of the new express logo 'Xpresso' at the Point depot by Minister for Public Enterprise Mary O'Rourke. Many of the recently-delivered Olympians were there with Xpresso blinds and Super CitySwift livery.

Announcements were made of new Xpresso routes, increased peak hour frequencies and extensions of several routes to serve the UCD Campus at Belfield were made. Some of the new routes will be delayed until September to allow for delivery of new Olympians. Existing express services extended to Belfield are 25X, 32X, 39X and 70X. Meanwhile due to the success of the new 46X Dun Laoghaire-Dublin Airport, a new 58X has been introduced to serve the upper Dun Laoghaire-Glenageary area with one journey each way in the peaks.

New Volvo Olympian deliveries continue. Summerhill has received RV503-16 (99 D 503-16), following RV502 in white wedding livery which was allocated there in April. RV503-12 are in Super CitySwift colours and are

allocated to routes 13/13A to Ballymun while RV513-6 are in a green, yellow and blue livery for Airlink route 747. They have 66 seats and extra luggage accommodation and have enabled GAC KC117 to regain standard green livery, ex-Airlink. Conyngham Road has RV517-20 (99 D 517-20) in a new livery (though this is currently being modified) for a branded Railink service taking over from existing routes 90/91 between Heuston and Connolly stations via the city centre. None had entered service at the time of writing.

Recent agreement with trade unions has enabled all school services at Phibsborough to be contracted-out to a variety of private operators, using secondhand Duple Dominant and Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopards and Leyland Nationals. As a result Phibsborough is to reduce its Bombardier fleet considerably, and Olympians RA317-23 are to be transferred there from Summerhill as part of a process of reallocation which also sees RA324/5 go to Donnybrook.

Withdrawals are of Bombardier KD312 (GSI 312) and GAC KC34 (ZSI 34) from Summerhill, GAC KC88 (UZG 88) from Donnybrook, KC78 (KZG 78) and Bombardier KD16 (16 JZL) from Clontarf and KC201 (87 D 3203) from Donnybrook. Summerhill has transferred KC29, 31 to Donnybrook for further service, but KC32 has been withdrawn and is to be converted as a second 'Ghost Tour' bus.

It is planned that Mercedes minibuses ME23-5 should be repainted in Airlinks livery for a new service around designated city centre hotels and Busaras. ME22 is also back in traffic at Conyngham Road on route 123. Summerhill's route 41 has been branded 'Fingal Flyer', with Olympians RV366-84 suitably lettered.



Above right:
Dublin Bus is now branding its express route Xpresso, as seen on CitySwift-liveried Volvo Olympian RV473 (99 D 473).
CHRISTINA CURTIS

Right:
All the school contracts at Dublin Bus's Phibsborough depot have been contracted out to private operators, and more school services will follow suit with the new school year. Operating a former Phibsborough school service is a Leyland National 2 in full Stagecoach Ribble livery, re-registered 82 KE 825. Several small operators are involved; this is not Stagecoach getting into Dublin by stealth!
CHRISTINA CURTIS





Bus Eireann

New low-floor Wright Liberator dual-door-bodied Volvo B10Ls VWL2-4 (99 D 37615/20/3) have been delivered to Galway for city services, replacing GAC single-deckers. They are temporarily in service on country routes to Tuam, Mount Bellew and Cong.

Also new are 19 of the Mercedes-Benz O.404/Hispano Vita coaches, which have been delivered to Broadstone. They are undergoing extensive pre-traffic inspection and have not yet been registered. Further new VP-class Plaxton-bodied Volvos and SI-class Irizar-bodied Scania's are also expected soon.

Another GAC rural bus transferred to school work at Dundalk is KR157, now KS157. Duple-bodied Leyland Leopard DLS1 (85 LK 104) is stationed at Killucan, Co Westmeath both for school duties and for community service to Castlepollard and Mullingar.

IRISH INDEPENDENTS

Flyerbus, Dublin Airport

Five low-floor DAF SB220s are in service at Dublin Airport. Three have Plaxton Prestige bodywork, and are registered 97 D 623021-3, and while their original registrations are unknown they are some of the former Fast Train buses from Heathrow, operated originally by what was then Speedlink. The other two are amongst the very first to have Ikarus low-floor bodies and are 99 D 36979/83 (T114/5 UAU).

Above left: Recent deliveries of Volvo Olympians to Dublin Bus have been in a variety of liveries; RV514 (99 D 514) is in Airlink Airport Express livery. The front destination display is multilingual; 'Expresso' is nothing to do with DB's new Xpresso image!

DARREN HALL

Left: The days of new Olympians are numbered, and Dublin Bus has been looking at alternatives. This Stagecoach East London Alexander ALX400-bodied Dennis Trident, TA89 (T689 KPU), was demonstrated in Dublin recently

DARREN HALL



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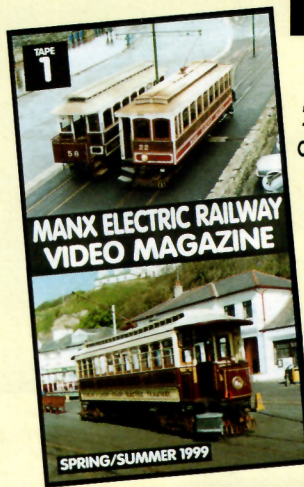
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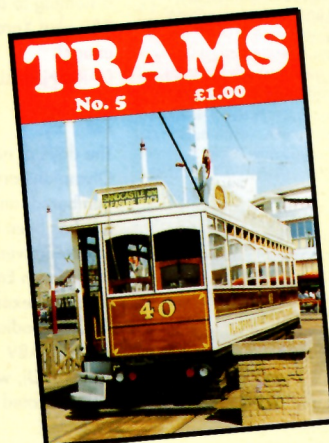
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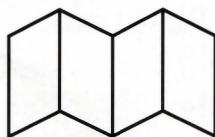
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Classified advertisements will be inserted in the first available issue after receipt, subject to availability of space. Copy with remittance to:
Buses, Classified Advertisements Department, Riverdene Business Park, Molesey Road, Hersham, Surrey KT12 4RG.

SITUATIONS VACANT

Memory Lane Vintage Omnibus Services PSV Drivers Required For Weekend Rota Work

Qualified PSV Drivers required for day time private hire and fare stage duties from our Surrey depot. Applicants must be aged 25+ and have empathy with vintage buses and coaches and show experience of driving pre-select and manual 'crash gearbox' vehicles. We require staff for Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays working on a rota basis to suit your availability. Our drivers are required to display a courteous manner to passengers as befits the era of the vehicles and our style of service. Your presentation is the keynote to our success.

If you are interested, and meet the above criteria, please apply enclosing a recent photograph and stating experience etc to:

Box No.201, Advertisement Department, Buses Magazine,
Ian Allan Publishing, Riverdene Business Park, Molesey Road, Hersham,
Surrey KT12 4RG.

Interviews will be held in the Dorking area.

FOR SALE

ORGANIC GARDENING SEEDS. The ideal start for top crops. Fresh vigorous seeds without chemical treatment many popular vegetable, herb and flower varieties. Free catalogue from Chase Organics, Riverdene Business Park, Molesey Road, Hersham Surrey, KT12 4RG Tel.01932 253666 Fax.01932 252707.

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BLACK AND WHITE BUS PHOTOGRAPHS 1940s - date. Please send SAE for details of lists currently available. Kevin Lane, 15 Beech Green, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 1EB.

VEHICLE ILLUSTRATIONS AND PROMOTIONAL GOODS created for clubs and societies. A5 SAE for details to: The Image Team, 75 Avenue Road, Portsmouth, Southampton SO14 6TW (T).

BUS & AIRCRAFT BOOKS. Magazines, Ties, etc. 2 x 1st class stamps for lists: David Thomas, 1 Doddridge House, 11 St. Albans Avenue, Bournemouth BH8 9EF.

BUSES MAGAZINE - 80's, 296-423 plus singles. CBW sub only mags. Issue 1 to-date (2/92 - 5/99 inclusive). Phone for details 0161 442 9516.

ENTHUSIAST SELLING books, magazines, models ephemera. Send SAE Rees, 20 Rice Street, Port Talbot SA13 1SN

HUGE COLLECTION OF TIMETABLES. folders, books, magazines etc. Send for extensive catalogue: £1.20 to Gilbert, BCM 8215, London WC1N 3XX

ABCROSS (ALAN B. CROSS) PHOTOGRAPHS. 83 Northdown Road, Solihull, B91 3ND. We will be at Aston Manor Museum Open Day 11 July (the best event in the Midlands); Sandtoft 25 July and the 'Remember When' Open Day 14 August. Get your quill pens out and scratch the dates into your diaries NOW! Regret no lists or approvals service.

The ATPH
The Association of
Transport Photographers and Historians
For photos from the original
1950s negatives by
ARTHUR HUSTWITT
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Send stamped addressed envelope for full details.
ATPH (Dept BM)
PO Box 106, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6FP

REMEMBER WHEN
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No. 7 the Pavement, Popes Lane,
South Ealing, London W5 4NG
Tel/Fax 0181 579 3356 (Days)
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Why not pay us a visit soon. Buses E3 or 65. Underground South Ealing. BR Ealing Broadway.

Proprietor: Michael Room

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Phone: 015395 68540

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Contact E. H. Brakell or J. M. Brakell

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We cover all countries outside the British Isles

Meetings in London and Manchester

Bi-monthly A4 magazine

Membership details and sample magazine
37 Oyster Lane, Byleet, Surrey KT14 7HS

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Ex Reading 113 now fully restored at Sandtoft. Help us now to restore Ex London 1812 in time for the Millennium year.

For details of membership and a free copy of our monthly magazine Trolleybus write to:-

BTS Secretary (B)
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Southcote Road
Reading RG3 2DG

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COLLECTORS BUS LIST 143, 48 PAGES £2.40 UK, OVERSEAS £3.

Over 3000 different models for sale. Includes kit list. Also 400 different exhibition standard built kits. Many rare and unusual die-cast, tinplate and plastic buses, old Dinky, Corgi, EFE, Lesney, Brekina, Wiking, Diapet, Tomica and Solido plus hundreds of others. A fantastic list for any collector of buses. Plenty of cheap models suitable for repainting.

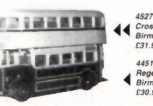
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EFE £11, Corgi 'OO' £12, post free. Cheapest in UK?
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NEW RANGE OF WATERSLIDE TRANSFERS for
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books and videos always wanted. Keegan's
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01189 587253 Fax: 01189 585220.

WANTED: BOOKS ON BUSES, TRAMS, RAILWAYS
& AVIATION Midland Counties Publications is looking
to buy books on these subjects. If you have a
collection to sell, or just need to make space, we can
help. Please call Mike Everton, on 01455 233747 or
write to: Midland Counties Publications, Unit 3
Maizefield, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 1YF.

LONDON TRANSPORT material purchased. Maps,
timetables, leaflets, blinds, tickets, badges,
enamelware, bus stops. High prices for older, quality
material. Tel: (01883) 723313.

BUS BOOKS, TIMETABLES, MAGAZINES MODELS
etc. purchased. Peak Models, 6 Holmesdale Road,
Dronfield, Derbyshire S18 2FB. Tel/Fax 01246
414473.

WANTED FOR A PRIVATE COLLECTION,
photographs, slides or negatives of Leyland National
Vehicles. Tel: 01383 414212.

PHONELINES

THE BUSES HOTLINE on 09068 448667 for all the
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Calls cost 60p/minute.

VIDEOS

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This unique record of ex-London Q1's on ALL 8 Spanish
Systems - just £14.95

Also featured every other major Spanish trolleybus
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Watch Algorta interurbans, extended Vetras and Q1 buses at
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Special extras - TETUAN (Morocco) and 1812's trip home.

For profit to go to preservation - order from/cheques to London Trolleybus
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e-mail: - david@davidvideo.co.uk

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Brookside Lane, Clifton, Nottingham NG11 8HB.

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21 years proudly presents an evening of transport
delights on July 24th at Mumford Theatre, Anglia
Polytechnic University, East Road Cambridge. With
the well-known transport historian John Huntley.
Show starts at 5pm. Tickets £5 from the box office on
01223 352932. Book early! Cambridge Omnibus
Society catering for everyone interested in
Cambridge buses.

EVENTS

HOWTH TRANSPORT MUSEUM DUBLIN

Commercial and Public Transport
Collection

Every Sat, Sun, Bank Holiday 14.00 - 17.00
10.00 - 17.00 Mon-Fri 1 June - 31 Aug
(Closed 17 - 25 Dec)

Adults £1.60, Children/OAPs 80p
Families £4.00

Members of bona-fide transport societies 80p on
production of current membership card.

John Woodhams Vintage Tours

CDL 899's 60th Anniversary Tour

Saturday 24th July

A special tour to celebrate 60 years service by the
grand old Bristol KSG of Southern Vectis, including
Isle of Wight open top routes past and present
Fare £15.00. Seats limited

Lost Railways and transport archaeology of the
Isle of Wight by Bedford OB coach

Saturday 11th September. Fare £13.50

Both tours depart from Ryde, full details from:

John Woodhams Vintage Tours
Grove Road, Ryde, Isle of Wight, PO33 3LH
Telephone (01983) 812147

REXQUOTE HERITAGE

GALA WEEKEND

7th - 8th AUGUST 1999

On both days there will be a regular free bus service
(15 minute frequency) between Taunton Railway Station
and The West Somerset Railway at Bishops Lydeard.

On Saturday there will be a half hourly excursion to the
Blackdown Hills.

On Sunday our regular heritage service will run with
duplicate vehicles and connecting free bus services.

Scheduled vehicles include: Daimler CVD6 Dennis
Lancet, AEC Regal 3, Bristol L5G, Leyland P.S.1 and
P.S.2, Leyland Royal Tiger and Tiger Cub, AEC
Reliance, Leyland P.D.2 and AEC Regent 3

For more details send SAE to:

Rexquote Heritage, Station Works, Station Road,
Bishops Lydeard TA4 3BU
OR PHONE: 01823 433398

PC BUS for Windows BUS RECORDING & SIGHTING DATABASES

The only system for the 'true bus enthusiast'

System contains Owner, Body Type, Chassis & Bus Livery Databases,
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SERVICES

REXQUOTE HERITAGE

Announce the introduction of it's Taunton
Deane Heritage Service every Wednesday,
Thursday and Sunday. Commencing Sun-
day 18th July until Sunday 12th September.

From Bishops Lydeard Station. Every 2
hours from 10.00am to 4.00pm. Hop on and
off at any stop or just ride all day for £6.00.

All buses are pre 1956 and most are
traditional half-cabs.

For more details send SAE to:

Rexquote Heritage, Station Works,
Station Road, Bishops Lydeard TA4 3BU
OR PHONE: 01823 433398

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Examining the history of Charles H. Roe from the earliest days through to the latest products to emerge from the Crossgates factory, this book is a detailed and highly illustrated investigation of the company and its products over more than 70 years.

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CLASSIC BUS YEARBOOK - 5

By Gavin Booth ISBN: 0711026688 325mm x 172mm H/B 128pp £13.99

For 1999, Gavin Booth, editor of the popular bi-monthly magazine *Classic Bus* has gathered together a further selection of fascinating articles that recall the great days of the British bus industry.

FIRE ENGINES: A COLOUR PORTFOLIO

By Roger Mardon ISBN: 0711026394 184mm x 235mm H/B 80pp £14.99

This book recalls, pictorially, through the use of some 85 colour photographs, the development of the fire engine from the late 19th century through to the modern age. Not only are the conventional vehicles illustrated, but the author has also provided reminders of many of the specialist pieces of equipment that were and are so much a part of the life of fire fighters in Britain.

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF TRACTORS

By Jim Wilkie ISBN: 0711026254 235mm x 172mm H/B 128pp £18.99

Noted tractor expert, Jim Wilkie, provides a comprehensive account of the development of the tractor from its origins in the 19th century through to the models seen on the farms of today.

Superbly illustrated throughout with some 250 black and white photographs, this book is an excellent survey of the tractor and the various manufacturers whose names are synonymous with the industry.

HEAVY PLANT IN COLOUR

By Hinton Sheryn ISBN: 0711026386 235mm x 172mm H/B 80pp £14.99

A selection of some 85 colour photographs portraying heavy plant and machinery in use. Covering the great variety of heavy plant, the book explores such themes as grab cranes, walking draglines, stripping shovels, endless bucket trenchers and backhoes.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

THE HEYDAY OF THE BUS: THE POSTWAR YEARS (REPRINT)

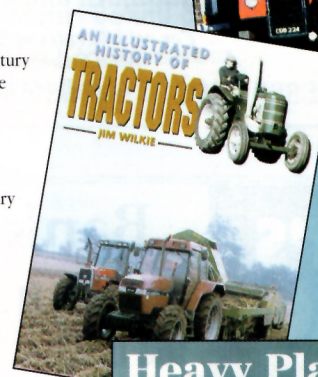
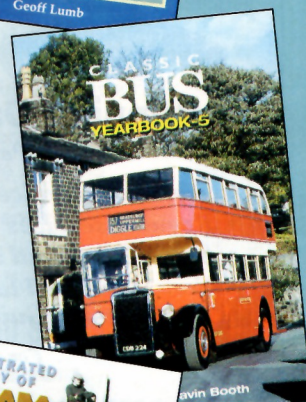
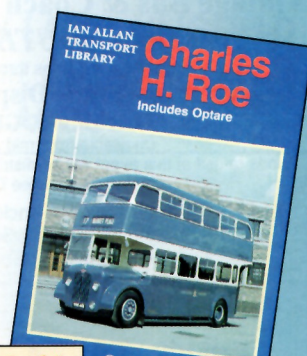
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www.ianallanpub.co.uk

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MIDLAND COUNTIES PUBLICATIONS (BX), UNIT 3 MAIZEFIELD, HINCKLEY FIELDS, HINCKLEY, LEICS LE10 1YF.

Tel: 01455 233747 Fax: 01455 233737 E-mail: midlandbooks@compuserve.com

Credit card orders welcome - anytime - day or night

PAYMENT: Visa/Mastercard/Eurocard/Connect and Switch charge cards; Post Giro 450 6154; Eurocheque (max £700); Sterling cheque (drawn on a UK bank), made payable to Midland Counties Publications; British Postal Orders. Orders are sent surface mail - airmail despatch by arrangement.

Please allow 28 days for delivery.

POSTAGE & PACKING CHARGES: UK - please add 10% (minimum £1.50; maximum £3.00), orders over £40 value are sent post-free.
Overseas - please add 15% (minimum £2.00); 10% for £150+ orders.

NEW EVENT*The first*
LITTLEHAMPTON**NEW EVENT****FREE ADMISSION****BUS GATHERING & RUNNING DAY
SUNDAY 4TH JULY 1999****from 10-30am in St. Martins Car Park.**2 minutes walk from the Railway Station, the Town Centre Bus Stands
& the Town Centre Shops. 5 minutes walk from the Beach.**Vintage Bus & Coach Services running
over former SOUTHDOWN routes.**

(Over 60 departures throughout the day)

**Mystery Tours, Static Displays & Sales Stands.
COLOUR SOUVENIR PROGRAMMES £3 (inc p&p)**
(available from mid June 1999)Funds raised at this event will be distributed to local charities by the
Littlehampton Silver Jubilee Carnival Association.**NEW
EVENT**For details please enclose an S.A.E. to
Trevor Hockham, 38 West Way,
Littlehampton, West Sussex. BN17 7NA**NEW
EVENT****FREE SERVICES****ASTON MANOR TRANSPORT MUSEUM**The Old Tram Depot, 208-216 Witton Lane,
Aston, Birmingham B6 6QE

Tel: 0121 322 2298

Open Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday
Mondays 11a.m. - 5p.m.**1999 EVENTS**

Sunday 11th July

Museum Annual Open Day and Vehicle Gathering in
conjunction with Aston Hall and Aston Parish Church.
Sales Stands, Working Vehicles, Model Displays, Model
Tram and Trolleybus layout in operation. Entry forms
available by sending SAE to the museum.

FREE

Classic bus service to Aston Parish Church and Aston Hall
plus FREE bus service from Birmingham City Centre
(Rotunda) every 30 minutes from 10.45

■ MUSEUM SHOP ■ CAFETERIA ■ DISABLED ■ ACCESS/PARKING

BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY - 30th AUGUSTNEW FOR '99 ASTON MANOR TRANSPORT MUSEUM and BIRMINGHAM RAILWAY
MUSEUM at Tyseley are linked by a Bus Service **FREE** for Museum visitors, for the
first time. Additional attractions at both venues. Further details available later.**SATURDAY 11th AND SUNDAY 12th SEPTEMBER****NATIONAL HERITAGE DISCOVERY WEEKEND****FREE** Bus Service linking the Museum with other heritage attractions e.g. Aston Hall,
Soho House, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, **FREE** admission to Aston Manor
Transport Museum this Weekend.**SUNDAY 19th SEPTEMBER**22nd Outer Circle Rally and Run at Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. Entry form for
vehicles and sales stands available by sending SAE to A.M.R.T.M. Ltd., 99 Billesley
Lane, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9RB.

Note - Museum Closed This Weekend (Saturday & Sunday)

SUNDAY 28th NOVEMBER

Collectors Fair. A variety of stalls with something for everyone.

The 1999 Open Day E.F.E. Model (Code 2) will be a Routemaster RML 903
(WLT 903) and will be available at the Open Day from the museum shop.
For further information please telephone during opening hours.**July 18th
1999****Running Day and Bus Rally***at Anstey Park, Alton, Hampshire*

- *Free local services from Rally Site*
- *Regular services to Mid-Hants stations*
- *Static buses and sales stands at Anstey Park*
- *Free 'early and late' bus connections with Basingstoke, Guildford and Winchester*

For vehicle entry or stall holder contact
Alan Fairbrother on 01420 87482
or E-Mail Fairybus@aol.com**IT'S
BACK!****Bank Holiday Monday 30 August 1999
2nd REAR-ENGINEED RALLY**

BaMMOT. Registered educational charity no. 507191

**BaMMOT, Chapel Lane, Wythall,
near A435/junction 3 M42 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

- The rally for owners and supporters of rear-engined buses and coaches but all vehicles welcome
- Bus rides (incl. route 750 from central Birmingham, Smallbrook Queensway stop LC, beneath Bull Ring overbridge, at 11.30 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. - fare £1.00)
- Miniature steam railway, cafeteria, sales stands, displays and battery-electric vehicle collection
- £3 Adult; £1.50 Senior Citizens/Children/UB40;
£7 Family (2 adults + 2 children)

For vehicle and sales stand entry forms and
other information, SAE to:
Rear-Engineed Rally Organisers,
Birmingham & Midland Museum of Transport,
Chapel Lane, Wythall,
Birmingham B47 6JX

☎ 01564 826471

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THE ROUTEMASTER IS 45 YEARS OLD...



THE ROUTEMASTER ASSOCIATION

45th ANNIVERSARY ROAD RUN

SUNDAY 1st AUGUST

CENTRAL CROYDON

(Depart 09.00)

– PURLEY – GODSTONE –
– LINGFIELD STEAM RALLY & COUNTRY SHOW

ALL ROUTEMASTER TYPES WELCOME

ROUTEMASTER
OPERATORS & OWNERS
ASSOCIATION

Vehicle Entry Details And Information:
RMOOA
31 Pooley Avenue
Egham, Surrey TW20 8AB
(Please enclose SAE)

LINGFIELD STEAM & COUNTRY SHOW

POND FARM, RAY LANE, LINGFIELD

(OFF A22 AT BLINDLEY HEATH, JUST FOLLOW AA SIGNS)

JULY 31ST & AUGUST 1ST



ADMISSION: ADULTS £5, CHILDREN & OAP £3

Why not come to the show by Public Transport!

£1 reduction on admission fees on production of
valid travel passes/tickets to Lingfield

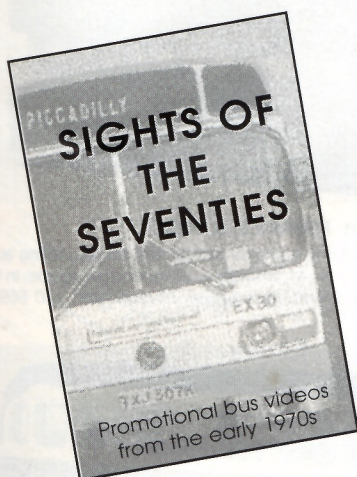
Free Bus Service to & from the event from Connex
South Central, Lingfield Station on both days
Preserved buses etc. welcome.

Phone Stuart Boxall on:
0181 777 6128 for details.

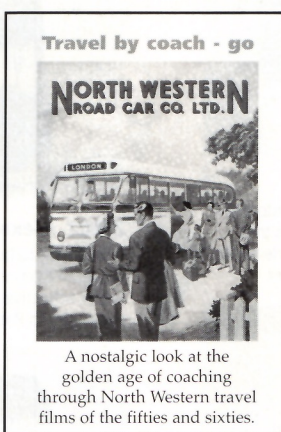
All other enquiries phone: 01293 773834



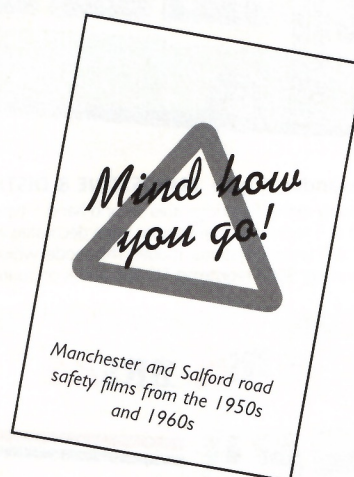
Three great videos - one great Museum to buy them from at £17.00 each



Sights of the seventies: three vintage
promotional videos about new
developments in this exciting era.
Running time 34 minutes.



Travel by coach - go North Western:
three films made by BET's film unit
to promote the beauties of coach
travel in a golden age. Running time 64
minutes.



Mind how you go:- from kerb drill to
zebra crossings, good advice - and
vintage road scenes - in road safety films
from the 50s and 60s. Running time 44
minutes.

For your copy, send a cheque for £17.00 (includes P & P) per video (made payable to GMTS Sales Ltd) to: Video
Sales, Museum of Transport, Boyle Street, Manchester M8 8UL. Allow 28 days for delivery.

NEW Exclusive First Editions RELEASES FOR JUNE 1999

1:76 Scale/00 gauge precision diecast models



26201 Guy Arab I Utility Bus COVENTRY TRANSPORT.

The rich maroon and cream of the Coventry Transport fleet has always been popular with collectors and this combined with the first release of our Guy Arab I Utility will make this model very desirable. The model features fleet number 313 registered EKV 713 on route 13 to Willenhall, with adverts for Atkinson Ales, Corona soft drinks it also has legal wording to both sides of the body, a peculiarity of this fleet.



25703 Daimler DMS SOUTH YORKSHIRE.

Ordered new for Sheffield these buses went into the cream and tan livery of South Yorkshire. The model fleet number 1510 registered OKW 510R is on route 17 to Hillsborough, Attercliffe and carries adverts for Hotpoint Dishwashers and Crawfords Crackers. The model features a great amount of detail including the drivers assault alarm fitted to the front of the upper deck.



E22709 Alexander Y Type MAIDSTONE & DISTRICT.

To increase capacity in the Tonbridge area second hand Y types were brought into the fleet and based at Edenbridge. The vehicles were decorated in a livery similar to that used on our M & D Leyland National model. This model which will be in great demand, features fleet number 3004 registered TJS 86S and is on route 204 to Underriver.



22909 Bedford TK Box Van B.R.S. TRUCK RENTAL.

Continuing to build our British Road Services fleet is this attractive Bedford TK in the distinctive B.R.S. Truck Rental livery. This vehicle registered JTC 48P which features the early all white livery with red, white and blue branding, makes an excellent addition to our fleet and is a must for the B.R.S. enthusiast.



13406 Horsfield Tramcar LEEDS TRANSPORT.

This attractive release of our Horsfield tram is in one of the experimental liveries used by Leeds Transport. Car number 242 is on route 4 to Kirkstall Abbey and the livery features silver to the underside running gear and pale blue-green bands around the body. The sides and ends carry adverts for Mackeson, Melbourne Ales and Tetley Beer, this is a model not to be missed.



24807 Mercedes Minibus SCARBOROUGH SKIPPER.

As part of the East Yorkshire Group, Scarborough & District operated these minibuses in this attractive Scarborough Skipper livery. This model of fleet number 441, registered F441 GAT on route 2 to Evalyn Drive will make a good addition to our East Yorkshire fleet and should be in great demand.



23802 Alexander Atlantean FISHWICK & SONS.

Continuing to build this popular and interesting Lancashire fleet we are adding an ex-Glasgow Corporation Atlantean which was originally a demonstration vehicle. In the rather attractive colours of Fishwick & Sons, fleet number 34 registered SGD 669 is on route 111 to Preston Fox Street.



16318 Bristol LS Bus Midland General.

Midland General is a fleet that is continually requested, so this LS bus will be well received. The model looks particularly stylish in this rich blue and cream livery and fleet number 245 registered 959 ARA is on route E2 to Matlock and displays the underlined Midland General fleet name on the front and sides.

Keep up to date with all our model release information by joining our Subscription Service for an annual U.K. fee of £4.
Send stamps, cheque or postal order to:

Exclusive First Editions, P.O. Box 24510, London, E17 4TG